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ABSOLUTE UNDERGROUND

Vol. 13-#1-Issue 73-December 2016/January 2017

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Heron

Interview by Willow Gamberg

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking with and what are you most infamous for?

Ross Redeker: guitar, string-snapper, knuckle-breaker, stage-spitter.

Bina Mendozza: Hard-hitting, doom-bringing, laid-back groove drummer. Famous for bleeding on my drums, being a heartbreaker, forgetting songs and having a hot ass.

Scott Bartlett: Guitar player, bringer of tone

Jamie Stilborn: Vocal grunts, noise-master and button-pusher.

AU: You've just released your new album, *Fire Twin* – tell us about it! What can we expect to hear in comparison with your debut self-titled?

Ross: *Fire Twin* is a pretty different album. The first record was a little more open and dynamic in regards to style, but I feel as though this album is a little more honed and polished. I think we just had to purge out all these sporadic, spastic riffs that never really fit with the current project we were in. Don't get me wrong, we love the self-titled album, but we are hella excited for *Fire Twin*. It still has that original Heron sound, with big open soundscapes, but it's definitely a heavier album. We slowed things down and gave it more mood and flow. I think we've accomplished that.

AU: Does *Fire Twin* explore any particular themes or topics, musically or lyrically? What was the writing and recording process like?

Jamie: Some common themes in our songs are decay, isolation, longing... our insignificance on a galactic scale. Writing and recording was pretty effortless; it just felt like a bunch of friends hanging out and we just happened to be recording. We didn't set out to make a perfect record. We wanted to make a loud, dynamic record and [we] are really happy with the results.

Scott: *Fire Twin* is the second album we have recorded with Kevin Grindon of Grindcity Recordings. Kev is a pro, and made it easy for us to come in and nail the whole record in just a few days.

AU: This release is digital only for now – when and where can we grab some vinyl?

Bina: Vinyl will be available early 2017. Check the metal section in local record stores, or grab a copy at a gig! For now, you can download *Fire*

Twin at www.heronvan.bandcamp.com!

AU: Tell us about your next upcoming show – what's it all about?

Scott: Our next show is a killer one. We're playing the Art Signified Four Year Anniversary show on Jan 21st/22nd at the



Rickshaw Theatre with a ton of other Vancouver bands. These gigs are fun to play, and never disappoint. It will get rowdy as fuck, so if you're in the Vancouver area, don't miss this one.

AU: What can we expect to see from a Heron set? What do you hope audiences will take away from your live performance?

Jamie: We like to play loud and with a lot of energy. We also like to arrange our sets as a whole that builds and builds with the occasional break to catch your breath. We just hope people are having as much fun [experiencing the live show] as we do writing and practicing. There are few things as satisfying as a crowd responding positively to something you've worked hard on.

AU: Do you plan on touring at all for *Fire Twin*?

Jamie: Our plan is to keep playing shows in the Lower Mainland, and when the record gets a vinyl release, we'll do a West Coast tour. We have been writing new songs since we finished this record, and will most likely have some more recorded by then, so most likely we will keep staggering digital releases, physical releases, and support tours.

AU: What are your goals as a band? Any particular cities, stage lineups, or tours you dream of attaining?

Bina: Goals are touring the west coast of the US in 2017, and one day getting over to Europe, keeping momentum and recording another album next year.

AU: You're all active members of the Vancouver music scene, tell us about what's happening in Vancouver right now. Any projects you're particularly stoked on?

Bina: I've seen the music scene change over the years tremendously. Taking a step back from Vancouver and touring, seeing what is happening outside of Vancouver, was key to finding my own rhythm. When I joined Heron this year, it was an easy fit, and we wrote most of this album in one or two jams. We weren't rushing to find our sound, it just came rushing out of us like we've been holding something in for a long time. The

music scene here is very much like family. Lots of support from other musicians and lots of independent venues supporting the scene.

Scott: Craters, Seven Nines & Tens, Woe Monger, Spell and Satans Cape are bands I have been really stoked on lately. Vancouver's metal scene is always thriving, it's so hard to mention all the bands we love, because there are so many. Also, everything Studio Vostok is doing... It's a great venue, and the stage sound is unreal. I'm very proud of those losers Mitch and Taya of Art Signified who have become great friends of ours over the years!

AU: What direction do you intend to take Heron, musically speaking? What kind of evolution have you seen in your sound and as a band since your inception?

Ross: Heron started as a three-piece. I thought I would be able to bring this vision to life live, but I wasn't able to perform 100%. Things started to lack and fail. Finding Jamie made it possible for me to just concentrate on playing and grunting, while he took on the main vocal responsibility and all of our loops, noise and samples. Our past drummers were amazing and helped us move

VANCOUVER VENGEANCE

forward, but having Bina has really solidified us as a band. We're in sync, cohesive and firing on all pistons... and still excited every time we have a practice. As far as direction goes, we all just get together and play. No real agenda. No forcing it. If a great song is gonna happen, then it will happen. As long as it's heavy, and makes us move, then we love it.

AU: What should we know about Heron that we don't already?

Heron: Ross loves Sumac more than he loves himself. One of us can't handle one drink without passing out, while another can't handle one hit of marijuana without doing the same. We'll leave it to you to determine which is which.

AU: Any final words for readers?

Scott: Matt Pike For President!

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Concrete Funeral

Interview by Roger the Shrubber

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

Devin Schum: We are Concrete Funeral out of Calgary, Alberta. I'd say we are most infamous for our pounding live show and inappropriate sense of humour.

AU: Tell us about Concrete Funeral. Where/when did you start? Describe your music for those of us that haven't heard you before.

DS: We started out playing shows in July of 2015. We spent almost two years in the basement getting ourselves ready for the stage, our original lead guitarist left about three months before the first show and Jesse joined, adding killer solos and bailing us out, haha. As far as our sound goes, I think our influences shine through. We consider ourselves to be what we call a "deathy fu%*in' thrash" band, but lately [we] have been adding some groove as well. It's heavy, mean, and driving!

AU: What's this we hear about Calgary Beer Core... what's it all about? How do we enter... There's beer, right? We love beer!

DS: The Calgary Beer Core is actually a tight

knit family of friends like Mark Russell, Jim Martin, Katie Bevan, Sean Close... I'll go blue in the face trying to name them all, who have been doing shows in Calgary for a while now, I believe they just celebrated their tenth anniversary. If you wanted to enter for the Beer Core Awards, all you'd need to do is get ahold of them and book your band in to play one of their shows. They're honestly the most accepting group of people I've met (which was completely unexpected before making it onto a stage) and they're probably mostly

responsible for giving us (as well as every other band in town) an opportunity to make a name for ourselves here at home. They own and operate out of a bar called Distortion in Calgary. Oh, and there's beer... there's SO MUCH beer!

AU: Do you have an album in the works, and when can we hear it?

DS: Yes! We have an album in the works as we speak! We are in the preproduction stages right now, we'll be teaming up with Nate Reno and Ghost Iron Studio in Calgary and hopefully will be releasing early 2017.

AU: What do you have inspiration from, musically or otherwise? Anything we might find surprising?

DS: I'm sure bits of bands like Lamb of God, Exodus, Warbringer and Death can be heard throughout our tunes. Other than music, we find inspiration in just the twisted nature of humanity and life itself, but other stuff is just embellished in excess, like some of our favourite overly violent movies and shows. I love stuff like *Grindhouse* and *Hobo With A Shotgun*, so sometimes I'll write stuff

that's over-the-top to the point of being silly, just for the fun of it.

AU: What can we expect to see when Concrete Funeral takes the stage? What do you hope audiences take away from your performances?

DS: When we get up there, a crowd can expect for us to get the pace going quickly and keep it there, we love to have fun and kid around up there a lot, while still pounding you over the head. We try to keep things as fun as possible, for ourselves as well as the audience. Most of all, I think that we hope an audience will walk away thinking, "Wow, those guys really bust ass up there," and hopefully the tunes grab them, as well. We really like to leave ourselves up there and give it everything

we've got. Otherwise what's the point, ya know?

AU: What are your plans for the new year? Any tours in the works?

DS: For the new year, we really want to get this album finished and released. After that, yes, there will be a tour, probably in the spring or summer depending on a few other factors.

AU: What do you guys do when you're not playing music?

DS: Ha, there's other stuff to do! Well, Paul has his MMA stuff, but I think the rest of us are mostly practicing or just hanging out with a beer or something to that effect. I almost always have a guitar in my hands in my spare time.

AU: What are your hopes for the future of the band? Any particular long term goals?

DS: Our future plans are basically the same as our start-up plan was, which is just to put out efforts

CALGARY CARNAGE

into having the best product that we're capable of and see how far we can push it to go. I don't like to set unrealistic expectations, so it's always just reading the reactions and going from there. One goal that we do have is that we are hoping to get onto some of the summer festivals this year, like Armstrong Metal Fest, Loud As Hell, Metallion, etc. We were already fortunate enough to make our way onto Calgary Metalfest opening for Toxic Holocaust, which was amazing for us and we'd like to keep that momentum going.

AU: When can we see you play live? Any shows coming up?

DS: At the moment we only have one show booked, as we're trying to complete our album; it's on December 17th at Distortion in Calgary. It's just a crushing lineup and we're stoked to be on it.

AU: What should we know about Concrete Funeral that we don't already?

DS: One thing people may wanna know about us, especially if you've seen us before, is that we've just got our new drummer all up to speed, and he is really stepping these songs up to a new level. We're super proud that he's joined our lineup, and can't wait for everybody to hear us with Connor on the kit!

AU: Any final words for our readers?

DS: Yes, support your local scene! Find some bands in your town that you like and support the hell out of them. Especially if you're in a band, too many guys can't be bothered, and then wonder why nobody comes to their shows. We wanna see the metal scene grow!

[facebook.com/Concrete-Funeral-972733492737218/](https://www.facebook.com/Concrete-Funeral-972733492737218/)

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Sad Face, Good Music

By Andre 'Rezine' Lanier

Montreal is still a big mess when it comes to infrastructure, I'm always wondering how can tourists make it here, it's so complicated for regular people to just get around and get to work. I don't know if you heard, but the cops also are tapping phones of journalists. Anyway, we all have our problems, but at least we have bands that have come out with some good stuff lately.

Hashed Out: The band just released a new album titled *Cosmic Pessimism* on L'Oeil du Tigre Records. It's heavy and sounds great. It starts with a bass full of distortion to set the tone of the album, it feels a bit sludgy, but the fast rhythm brings us back to hardcore. You get to feel the anger. Love the beats hammering through the short songs, with some great guitar melodies. The album cover of a sad face is a great idea, you get to see a lot of people on Facebook holding the album in front of their face.

Fuck Toute: French band this time, with a similar hardcore sound fused with a heavy stoner feel. They just released a self-titled album, and I must admit that I have been waiting for it a long time. I loved their previous project, *Les Guenilles*, and was a bit disappointed to hear that it was over, but when I heard that *Fuck Toute* is their new project, I just couldn't wait to hear the new songs with their new sound. They told me that the lyrics

are inspired by the beauties of chaos, so they made a beautiful album.

Mauvaise Conduite: Here's a band I didn't know until recently. I found their three-song demo and loved the music. The style is again hardcore, but with more of a punk rock twist. Very intense, but simple and efficient. Their influences range from Bad Brains and Cro-Mags to Circle Jerks and lots more. They also told me that they plan to come out with a cassette tape version of their demo and will play a show for St. Patrick's Day.

Chârogne: Here's another band of French-speaking Montrealers. This time, the band is punk and explores different styles. Clearly Riot Grrl is what defines them for the messages of their songs. The band just launched a new single called "Feministe Frustrée" that you can listen to on Bandcamp, and they have a video clip for the song available on YouTube. Their music is not as heavy as the other bands listed here, but the lyrics are involved socially and politically and in the world that we now live in, we need those opposing voices and songs. They have another single coming out soon, named "Usine à Bébé" An album will follow very soon; I can't wait to hear more songs from Chârogne.



Hold A Grudge: They are legends in the oi! punk community of Montreal. Unfortunately, the band is no more, but at least they left with a great album available in cassette form on Rebel Time Records. They have some great music on the album, and the last song is their chance to say thanks to everyone in the scene. Love the aggressiveness and the melodies of the songs, good times, too bad we won't be able to see them live again, but the tape is there.


MONTREAL MASSACRE

bands that I have mentioned have Facebook and Bandcamp pages, go check them out and see if the music fits with your taste. Also if you have a band from Montreal or elsewhere send me your information and I will check it out: morbleu1@gmail.com

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Absolute Underground's Best Of 2016



Who are you and what are you best known for: Cam Pipes, lead vocalist of 3 Inches of Blood

Favourite Local Band that everyone should know about: Unleash the Archers

Best Album of the Year: Running Wild - *Rapid Foray*

Shittiest Album of the Year: Anything Five Finger Death puts out

Best Live Show of the Year: Electric Light Orchestra at the Hollywood Bowl

Best/Worst Movie of the Year: Best - new *Star Wars*, Worst - the *Ghostbusters* remake

Best Artist deserving of more recognition: Blood Ceremony

Clusterfuck of the Year: My upstairs neighbours

2017... What is your prediction? Christy Clark and the BC Liberals will somehow win the election, thus stalling BC's progress for at least a few more years.



Who are you and what are you best known for: Billy Hopeless, Black Halos and solo artist, Vancouver mythological monster

Favourite Local Band that everyone should know about: Bishops Green are killer, but also really digging Erin from Rebel Spell's new group, Alien Boys.

Best Album of the Year: I'm going with The Michael Monroe Band's *Blackout States*, or the return of *Guitar Mafia*, D Generation's latest offering.

Shittiest Album of the Year: Didn't buy it so I don't know. Too many member berries rehashing the arts of their past into so-called new songs.

Best Live Show of the Year: The Alice Cooper tour this year takes it... fooking "Halo of Flies" live, done to perfection, ya can't beat that.

Best/Worst Movie of the Year: Best movie is tough, as me and Bean watch so many movies, but Andy Samberg's *Popstar* was killer, what a cast of cameos, made up for Adam Sandler's recent offerings.

Best Artist deserving of more recognition: My buddy Dirty Donny Gilles, the guy not only does killer cool prints, etc, but he created the art design for pinball games for bands like Metallica and the Helicopters!

Clusterfuck of the Year: Facebook

politics and wendythirteen losing her home at Funky's.

2017... What is your prediction? More dinosaurs reuniting and dying on their way to the tar pit, same old, newly marketed distractions, put-on government puppet shows to keep us preoccupied while they carry on their evil ways, more reboots of reboots, it's a retro world!



Who are you and what are you best known for: Malcolm Hassin, from SBC

Favourite Local Band that everyone should know about: Making Strangers

Best Album of the Year: New Dayglo Abortions, *Armageddon Survival Guide*

Shittiest Album of the Year: My new rap mixtape with MC Garbage Dick. It's big, but it stinks

Best Live Show of the Year: Nomeansno clones The Ramones

Best/Worst Movie of the Year: I barely watch new media, so I'll go with *Old Yeller* and *Homeward Bound* for the best. Worst? *Road to Avonlea*

Best Artist deserving of more recognition: The Boy! DTES Artist and painter

Clusterfuck of the Year: Funky Winkerbeans

2017... What is your prediction? My nude photos to go to obscene levels and get picked up by Prada and Louie Longshlong



Who are you and what are you best known for: I'm Abelardo Mayoral, or just "Mayo" like in Cinco de Mayo. I'm the concert promoter behind The Invisible Orange.

Favourite Local Band that everyone should know about: Gross Misconduct, who I have liked since long ago. I thought they were a touring band for a few days.

Best Album of the Year: Rotting Christ's *Rituals* got the most spins for sure this year. Honourable mentions to: Anaal Nathrakh, Uada, Abbath, Asphyx, Chthe'ilist, Inquisition, Dark Tranquillity, Zhrene, Phobocasm, Nails, Carpenter Brut, Vektor. Shit, it's been a good year! There are quite a few I haven't taken a good listen to, or are not out yet, like Bolzer, Auroch, Ancients, Destroyer 666...

BEST OF 2016

Shittiest Album of the Year: I know there have been a couple that I had good expectations about and then they came out as "meh," but I can't point them out. I can say that Gojira's new album looked promising when they released the first singles, then sounded "just ok" when released. But after that, it lost me. I even forgot they had an album this year.

Best Live Show of the Year: So many great shows this year! Slayer totally surprised me. I was not expecting much, as they are not the most amazing live band, but their show in Abbotsford was just intense. In the club/theatre size, I will say Rotting Christ. With honourable mentions to Leprous, Belphegor, Ulcerate, Vastum, all very solid shows. And in the local size shows, the benefit for Eileen was a lot of fun! Outside Vancouver: Asphyx at Hellfest! Inquisition in Bellingham.

Best/Worst Movie of the Year: I don't think I have seen any movies that were released this year... Oh I went to the theatre to see *Sausage Party*, it was ok, just a silly movie. I went to the Rio a few times, but it was for old movies... Oh wait! *Swiss Army Man*... that one was really good! Definitely check it out.

Best Artist deserving of more recognition: In general? Ok, I'm thinking of this question in many different ways. One thing I would like to say is that "extreme" music fans are not that extreme anymore, and try to stay within certain parameters. In the past, "extreme" artist always experimented with other genres, lots of electronic music, local folk, etc. So I want to say that pop music artists deserve more recognition from

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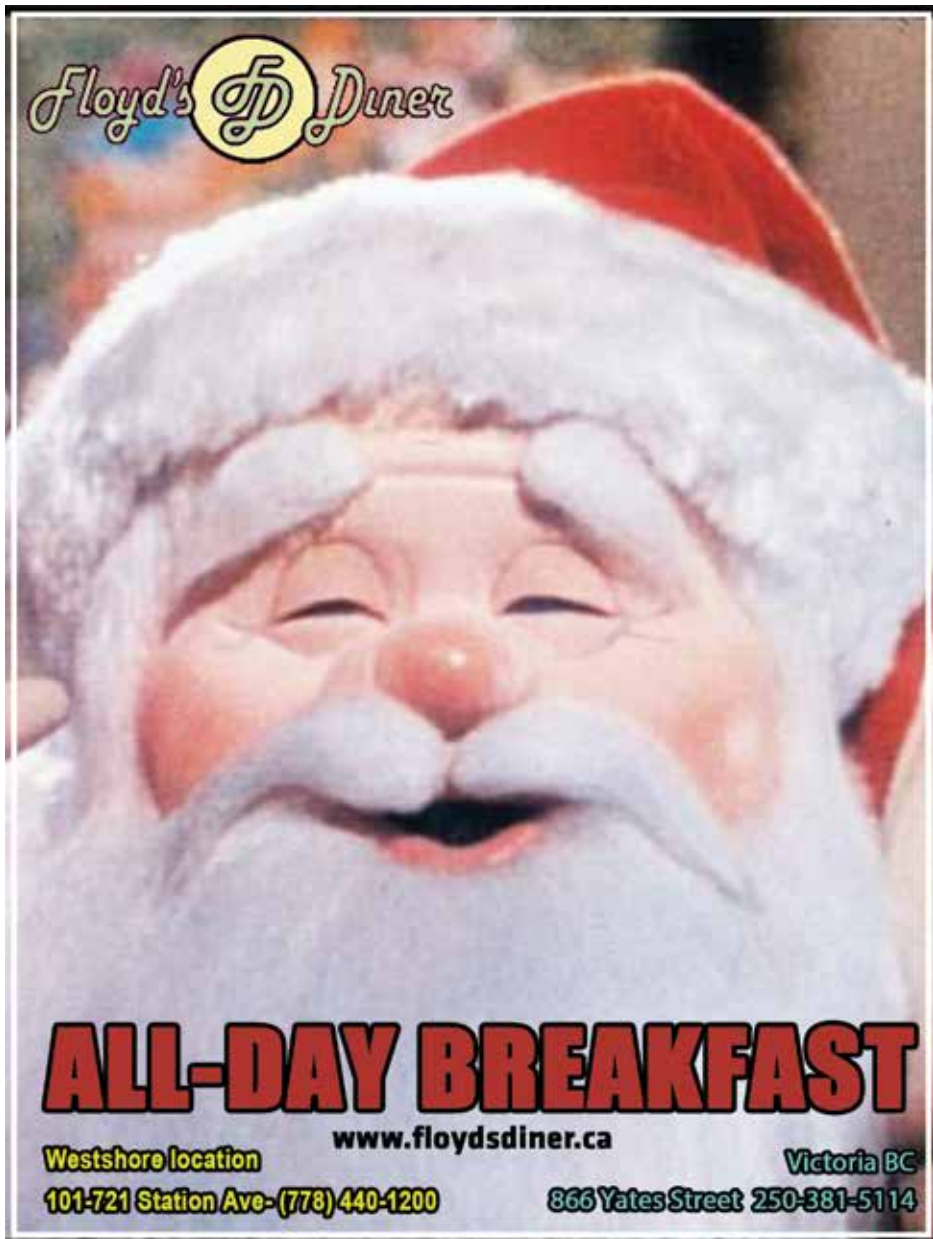


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the underground, as there is a lot of innovation there in production, ideas, marketing too. It gets very formulaic very fast though, but those sparks of innovation should be recognized. About local artists, I will take the chance here to say that Wendythirteen does great paintings. I was lucky I got this dragon in one of her art shows at Funky's, and I have it on a wall at my place. When people come visit, they will always ask about it. Almost no-one knew she could paint that well!

Clusterfuck of the Year: I'm going to stay away from politics here, haha! Or maybe local, I will say I have no idea why they are doing that new fence on the Burrard Bridge. Waste of money. In music, I would say Agalloch's breakup. That was clumsy AF. Personally, quite a few. I lost a lot of money producing concerts this year. It was bad, probably the worst year. But I think things started to look a little better now towards the end of the year.

2017... What is your prediction? It should be a fun year! It will still be busy for concerts. In general, I don't think the world will end this year. Yeah, some things are happening that could affect society, but we will see that in a longer term, say two-to-five years. So enjoy 2017, because I think it's on the way up, and it might be all downhill from there! Oh! In April, D.R.I. is coming to Vancouver finally, something I have been working on for years! I haven't been this excited about a show in a while.



Who are you and what are you best known for: I'm Dustin Schwam, tattoo artist at 477 Tattoos, singer in Keg Killers, washed-up Jak's Team Skater, and father.

Favourite Local Band that everyone should know about: Yeah, my newest band Fully Crazed. I get to drum again and wear a bandana, it's seriously fully crazed, man.

Best Album of the Year: Toss up between the Dayglo Abortions (sheer brutality), the Old Derelicts LP, or the last Savage Henry album... and The Spree Killers Split LP was good, too.

Shittiest Album of the Year: The last Bowie because he was hardly alive when he did it, so it was not what I was wanting... you have to know, I am a huge, huge Bowie fan... no disrespect, but that one puts me to sleep, man.

Best Live Show of the Year: Best live show of the year for me was playing with SNFU at Distrikt. We got to play, and then hang out with Chi Pig, Dirty Kurt and the boys, and the Jaks show down south with Fully Crazed and Verbal Abuse... I will get arrested if I talk about that, man.

Best/Worst Movie of the Year: Best movie was *The VVitch*, *Green Room* (Nazi skinheads, gore, and death metal? Hello?) *Stooges* was best documentary I saw. *Zoolander 2* was a huge piece of shit and I never hate a movie, but that one can fuck off.

Best Artist deserving of more recognition: Rush. People have seizures over hating on them so bad, it's just a fad for hipsters to have something to hate. I would rather grow up in a house with Rush playing, than a bunch of cunts listening to Leo Sayer. If Neil Peart got fuckin' cancer tomorrow every ass-hat in town would be on fuckin' board.

2017... What is your prediction? 2017... I have no predictions now. The new US President is taking the heat off Ted Nugent, so I'm cool.



Who are you and what are you best known for: Jon Asher, PR Guy at Asher Media Relations, best known for

working for tons of metal bands, labels and fests. I'll make ya famous!

Favourite Local Band that everyone should know about: Murtenscythe

Best Album of the Year: This album came out in 2005, but I only discovered it now *Thrice - Vheissu* and then for 2016 I have to say *Gojira - Magma*

Shittiest Album of the Year: Red Fang - *Only Ghosts* (just couldn't dig it)

Best Live Show of the Year: Calgary Metal Fest V - Annihilator, Exciter, Sacrifice, Razor

Best/Worst Movie of the Year: Best - *Zootopia* (I'm a kid at heart), Worst - *The Lobster* (just so slow and couldn't dig plot)

Best Artist deserving of more recognition: Beyond Fiction from Northern Quebec

Clusterfuck of the Year: Trump winning

2017... What is your prediction? More big rock stars will die and make room for new blood!

Who are you and what are you best known for: Chadsolute, art director and certified G of Absolute Underground!

Favourite Local Band that everyone should know about: Press Gang, Paint the Damage, Snakepit (Calgary), Bogue Brigade (Edmonton), Party Force (Oakland), Fully Crazed (Victoria)

Best Album of the Year: Agoraphobic Nosebleed's *Arc*, it came out last January and kept my attention all year. Plus Wacken's metal battle champs from a few years back Dust Bolt's *Mass Confusion* was a ripper.

Best Live Show of the Year: Riotfest in

BEST OF 2016



Chicago, the Misfits reunion was a lifetime highlight. Also D.R.I played a club show for over an hour and a half.

Gwar-B-Q in Richmond Virginia was once again a deadly time, EYEHATEGOD fronted by Phil Anselmo from Pantera and an after party gig by BAT (members of Municipal Waste and D.R.I) were the highlights which included a Cannibal Corpse show to kick off the weekend in the RVA heat.

2017... What is your prediction? Misfits reunion tour announced and Raiders over Cowboys in Houston Texas at the 2016 Super Bowl.

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| SAT 03 | TRUE RHYTHM ANNUAL FOOD DRIVE | RED CAIN / HEYOKA'S MIRROR / THE FATAL PURSUIT / BLQ | SAT 7 |
| THUR 8 | PUNK VS METAL SEASON 4 EPISODE 4 | TBA | FRI 13 |
| FRI 9 | CAVEAT / VILE INSIGNA / GALES OF AVALON HAZZERD / ILLUMINATED MINERVA | MAGDALENE CD RELEASE PARTY STAB.TWIST.PULL / PROFITS OF CRIME / SICK RITUAL | SAT 14 |
| SAT 10 | SUPREME HUSTLE PRESENTS CULTURE SATURDAYS | THE BUFFET / REVOLUTION ENGINE / 240 /BURLAP SAC | FRI 20 |
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| SAT 17 | SOCIAL ARSONIST / CONCRETE FUNERAL ILLYRIAN / PECADO / MEGGIDO | CALGARY BEER CORE PRESENT SEDATION CHOIR & GUESTS | FRI 27 |
| FRI 23 | SUPREME HUSTLE PRESENTS | SUPREME HUSTLE PRESENTS | SAT 28 |
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Savage Henry and the Infamous One Pounders

Interview by Hoon Trash and Dustin Jak

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

Savage Henry: I'm Savage Henry and I'm the commander-in-chief of this outfit! Savage Henry and the Infamous One Pounders! Hottest band in the land, baby!

AU: So what planet are you fuckin' maniacs from?

SH: We're men and we're from Maaarrrrssss, baby! We first pulled the ski masks on in 1998...

AU: Who were heavy influences on you guys?

SH: Early influences were Sloppy Seconds, The Mummies, The Ramones, of course, a band from here called Porksword, Van Halen (David Lee Roth years only, we're not idiots) and 70s and 80s *Penthouse Magazine*. For the articles.

AU: Girls across the country are lining up for a ride in your bitchin' custom van.

SH: She's an '82 Dodge Boogie Van, flat black paint, tinted windows, centerline wheels, faux leather interior, and all the creams and lotions that make for a romantic night out on the back roads. I like my van like I like my ladies, cleaned gently with baby wipes behind the Flying J...

AU: What's the cougar population of Saskatoon?

SH: I dunno, but judging by the one I took down last night, this place is crawling with them.

AU: Your live show includes your own tiki bar, exclusively serving your legendary "rum 'n smoke" (151 and coke with a smokie as garnish).

SH: We were recording the *Raw Gonzo* album, all holed up in a studio that's at a remote rural location. Times were tough, and my survival instinct is strong! I had brought enough smoked sausage to satisfy anyone, I mean, anyone... And enough liquor to make them want all that sausage in the first place!

AU: Do you have a snow suit fetish?

SH: Ever unzipped a gal where the zipper went from her sweet, sweet neck down to her ankle? And after an evening of trudging across the frozen prairie wasteland... She's been sweating in there, you know? God, I love a prairie girl on a cold night.

AU: What changes have you noticed since you started out as a band?

SH: Mainly? All these chicks will let you make porn with them now, and they all have nudes of themselves on their phones ready to fire off to every Tom, Dick, and Henry, at the drop of a hat. I can't even believe it! When we started this, you couldn't get a nude out of a broad because the people at the Photomat would see... see!?

AU: Any current bands you guys like?

SH: Turbonegro and The Dwarves never get old for me, I've been playing a band called The Bitch Queens quite a bit, Herd Of Wasters, Hip Priests, Frostbacks, I like The Matadors a lot...

AU: Bands you guys like to play with?

SH: We've been playing with The Gnar Gnars, Daddy Issues, Puttin' On The Foil, The Preying Saints, Keg Killers, Pervcore, The Brains, The Nielsens, and The Real McKenzies. Local bands like Xembryos, Shockflesh, Herd of Wasters.

AU: How many women does Henry need to

keep his monstrously perverse urges at bay?

SH: Five or six will make me pretty happy on any given weekend. Or maybe one really big one...

AU: How is the scene in Saskatoon?

SH: We own this town.

AU: What other bands have you guys been in over the years?

We currently have members from such Saskatoon greats as New Jacobin Club, The Heatscores, Xembryos, Rehashed, Herd of Wasters, Lavagoat, Denoginizer, The Great Shakin' Fevers, DFA, and Shockflesh.

AU: What's the weirdest show you guys ever played?

SH: We played an outdoor farm party on a semi trailer stage at a pig farm in rural Saskatchewan, once. The pigs all had these big long nipples growing out of their necks. All the chicks wanted to fuck us, and all the redneck dudes wanted to fight.

AU: Any plans to play Punk Rock Bowling?

SH: Maybe this year... Shit's in the works. Either way, I'll be there, dick in hand...

AU: How many albums have you guys got out?

SH: We have four albums and a Christmas EP, all available on Bandcamp! We also have the latest album, *Get Off Easy*, on orange-coloured vinyl available, you can just message us at our Facebook page, www.facebook.com/savagehenryandtheinfamousonepounders/ and order it from me there. I do the mailouts myself, because I like to, uh, touch all the merch.

AU: Explain what happens in a day in the life of Savage Henry!

SH: I wake up. It's late. I'm confused... Whose kitchen is this? I've been touching myself again. I don't remember, but there's evidence... I can hear a woman in the backyard, she's angry, I can't understand her... Is she retarded? Or is it me? I can't focus my eyes. I grab what could be my

SASKA-TUNE

pants and stumble out the front door. What place is this? My van is parked down the block... Let's roll. After a few hours of driving aimlessly, I pull up in front of a fantastic-looking luxury home. It's my place. I'm greeted at the front door by a beautiful woman. She's gorgeous, everything I ever wanted in a girl. "Who the fuck are you?" I bark at her... She's the maid. I pay her for the last two weeks and she makes a hasty retreat. Dragging my ass to the master bedroom, I pull the blinds and put on some slow jazz... I gotta get a pizza. I've got band practice again tonight... Gotta pull it together. It's only Tuesday.... Rock, roll, repeat... Got it?

AU: Any last words for our terrified and offended readers?

SH: Kids, rock and roll is like a steady piece of ass; if it's really good, or if you're always really loaded, it doesn't matter at all if it's the same day after day... So enjoy yourself. And ladies... I'm single...

savagehenryandtheinfamousonepounders1.bandcamp.com/

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Danyelle Tiestsma

Interview by Teagan Taylor

Danyelle Tiestsma is a tattooist at Incendiary Tattoos in Victoria, BC.

Absolute Underground: What led you to tattooing?

Danyelle Tiestsma: I started tattooing over six and a half years ago. I've always been an artist though, it runs in my family. My mom and my sister both draw, I've drawn my whole life and used to design tattoos for my friends and family. So it was always a natural underlying feeling of wanting to tattoo, it just never seemed real until I started to actually pursue it.

AU: Have you gone through any schooling for art?

DT: I'm pretty much all self-taught, although I did go to school for special effects and fashion makeup, which relates in the ways of skincare and how colour reflects on skin.

AU: What other mediums do you use?

DT: I use a lot of pencil, a lot of pencil crayon, those are my main go-tos. I do like to paint, I did my first oil painting about a year or two ago, and I love it. I think it helps with getting an idea



of where to put colours and how to block in tattooing, as well. That was a nice thing too, doing the Art Battles, that was totally new for me and kind of pushed me out into the "social art world." There's a lot of people out here my age, a lot of people I can relate to, so I really enjoyed that. I would like to compete in this upcoming season again.

AU: Who have your artistic influences been?

DT: I definitely have to shout out to my mom, Michelle, and my sister Brittani, because we continuously drove each other through our art paths with a mix of anime, realism, and everything in between. More well-known tattoo influences I've really come to admire are Cally Jo for her simplicity, Theresa Sharpe is someone I really aspire to be tattooed by, as well as admire for her design and texture, Tommy Lee Wendtner for his flawless monsters and demons. I also have always had a love for warped, bold, graffiti-like artwork, so people like Davee Blows and David Tavenal have really wowed me. And of

course, the artists I work with keep me motivated, supported and inspired everyday. The shop is my second home! I'm really just starting to get to know a lot of artists; when I started working here, I started doing a lot more traveling, a lot more conventions.

AU: Which conventions?

DT: Vancouver, Edmonton, and before that, I did the NIX convention: that was my first one. I've got the



travel bug now. August was a 12-day road trip of guest spots at Psycho City Tattoo in Kamloops and the Summer Buzz Weekend in 70 Mile House. We just got back from the Lethbridge convention. It was compact, which was awesome! Not that it wasn't exciting leading up to it, but this is definitely what I was really picturing with tattooing. I've had my head down drawing for so long, so it's pretty new and exciting to be dragged around to all of those new places, in such a short period of time, too.

AU: Beyond the travel, what's your favourite part about tattooing?

DT: Just people, I think. I've always had a knack for taking many elements of an idea and meshing them into a fluid design, like an ability to pluck the vision from people's heads. I love talking to people. People just open up if they want to or not, because tattooing them is such a personal thing.

AU: Musical influences?

DT: METAL! Definitely a lot of metal. I grew up on hard rock. Music is a huge influence... My whole left arm is mostly all musical influences. In particular, I guess, Deftones has always been one of my favourites.

Find more of Dani's work at incendiarytattoos.ca, facebook.com/daniteitsma and on Instagram @ [psychotica](https://www.instagram.com/psychotica)

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Absolute Business Profile

Style N' Print

Interview by Mr. Fantastic

Absolute Underground: Please introduce yourself.

Randy Stubbs: Randy Stubbs, owner, operator. Terry Fenner, main printer and all-around great guy.

AU: What's the history of your store, Style N' Print and Gallery 13? Tell us about your business, how/when did you start? Did you

at Cook Design Studios. From there, I formed Haute Auf Da Press with Duane Diebolt. We then partnered with Jesus Bonehead to put together Old Nick's Emporium. The print shop morphed into ONE Screenprinting, but after a failed Toronto expansion and having to move locations, I sold the parts to two people, one of which hired me as artist/printer. Since then, I have built up the clientele to where I managed to acquire the pieces to form Style'N'Print and with my main man Terry, we continue to grow and expand.

Terry and I moved into our current location at

in an Old Nick's sorta vein.

AU: What draws you to screenprinting as a business and as an art form? What types printing do you specialize in?

RS: Screenprinting has been part of my artistic process since art school, and it wasn't until my divorce forced me to branch out on my own that it really became my lifeblood. Being able to print band shirts for the Dayglo Abortions was the initial impetus, but it became apparent that I needed to expand beyond that if I was to create a life from it. A truly satisfying moment was when I was able to recreate my *Feed Us A Fetus* cover onto shirts via my own separations and printing.

We are known for being able to screenprint very detailed, multi-coloured prints. As for specializing, we tend to focus on bands and the various subcultures for our store, but our abilities allow us to do many other jobs, and do contract work for other shops.

AU: Do you have a favourite shirt or piece of merch that you've done so far?

RS: The *Feed Us A Fetus* cover comes to mind, but we also did a Megadeth shirt I was very

proud of. I also love Captain Spaulding and the colourful cast of horror characters we have done from Joel Shelton's artwork.

AU: What bands have you printed shirts for in the past?

RS: In the past, the list includes The Dayglo Abortions, NFOX, Lagwagon, Strung Out, Frostbacks, Explosive Rage Disorder, Meatlocker Seven, The Brains, SNFU, Raygun Cowboys, Ramones, Oh Shit, Guess What Peter Did, Smoked Out Brainzz and the Sasquatch Brothers, Total Shit, Preying Saints, Spirit Of The West, The Casualties, Cro-Mags, Bum, Nekromantix, Abuse Of Substance, Gomers, Order Of Chaos, UK Subs... and more.

AU: What sets your store apart from others?

RS: We are not a big box store, and the work is done by people who care, for the local market. We do bring in items from other wholesalers, but for the most part we want to be a part of the shop local community. Our shop has items you won't find anywhere else, or if you do, they are clients of ours.

AU: What's been the secret of your success and longevity?

stylenprint.com



RS: Sheer will and our client base. We try hard to bring the best product to the consumer, and we appreciate all the support we get from everyone we deal with. We strive to improve in all facets, and people appreciate our efforts.

AU: What other items do you have for sale in your shop?

RS: Other than shirts and sweaters, there are leggings, stockings, hand-crafted leatherwork, CDs, stickers, hand-printed posters, mugs, and more...

AU: How often do you have art shows at your shop?

RS: We like to do them once every two months, but I think the next one is going to be in January. I'm contemplating doing a retrospective of all my work. A bit self-serving, but since I have never had a showing before, it could be quite interesting.

AU: Where are you located?

RS: Our address is 2639 Quadra Street, right beside the Roxy Theatre (Blue Bridge Repertory), between a pot store and a pizza joint. We are in BC.

AU: What are your hopes for the future of the business, do you have any long term goals?

RS: The custom shop continues to thrive, but we really want to bring the retail store to the forefront. I want the retail store to really thrive, so come down and see us in person.

AU: What should people know if they want to get something printed with you? How can they go about submitting an order?

RS: Best to contact us via email at snp@shaw.ca or orders@stylenprint.com. Provide as many details as possible about the design and garments required. Add all contact info.

AU: What else should we know about Style'N'Print that we don't already?

RS: We are Victoria's hidden gem. It's sorta like the Tardis... Looks small on the outside, but there is a lot more going on inside.

AU: Anything interesting on the horizon you'd like to share?

RS: We are online at www.stylenprintshop.com, and there are lots of new shirts on the floor. Also, the December sales event is happening. Buy the first shirt for \$20.00, and every shirt after that is \$15.00. All tax included.

AU: Any final words for our readers?

RS: Visit us at stylenprint.com, and drop in anytime.



have any previous experience screenprinting before starting the shop?

RS: Style'N'Print started back in 2011, though as a printer, I have been involved with this industry for many years. I started back in 1993 after a divorce, forming Creatively Powered with Brian Whitehead (aka Jesus Bonehead), then worked

2639 Quadra back in March of 2015; it's got lots more production space, and 800 square feet of retail store. The idea was to sell shirts and support local artists via the gallery name. That is in the works, and my dream is to find someone who would like to come on board and turn our retail/gallery into a destination location. Our product line is quite darkly humorous and very colourful,



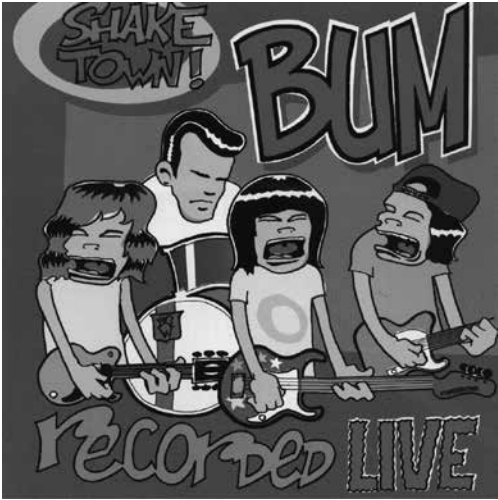
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BUM

Interview by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are you all about?

Rob Nesbitt: My name is Rob Nesbitt and I’m... in flux...

AU: Music resume?

RN: BUM, Section 46, The Astro Zombies, AK47, The Suitesixteen. Sometime-Jerk-Ward. Sometime-The Evaporators.

AU: What was the genesis of the formation of your band BUM?

RN: BUM was born in the old downstairs location of Lyle’s Place in early 1988. It started out as a conversation between myself and Andrew Molloy when I declared I wanted to be in a band like The Descendents.

AU: History of the band after you got the ball rolling.

RN: We started out as a cover band, playing songs by The Eastern Dark, Descendents and KISS, but after two shows Andrew and I started to bring in songs we had written ourselves for the band to try.

After rehearsing for a year with this material we had out first “real” show at Harpo’s in 1991. About a year later, our first seven-inch single came out and that started an avalanche of singles being released on labels all over the world.

We were very fortunate to be taken kind of under the wing of The Young Fresh Fellows from Seattle.

Their guitarist, Kurt Bloch (also of the Fastbacks) produced a bunch of recording sessions at Egg Studios in his hometown, and those songs would become our first full-length album, *Wanna Smash Sensation*. Tons of near-misses with lower-mid-level success (including and incredible tour of Spain in 1994) and we broke up in 1996, (I think).

AU: Did you guys take a unique approach at the beginning, or were you influenced by anything specific?

RN: Unique? I don’t know if the approach was necessarily unique. I said at the time that I wanted to sound like Black Flag meets The Smiths, which is to say a loud, aggressive approach applied to pretty melodies and heart-on-your-sleeve lyrics.

Art is such that no matter how blatant your influences, if you are of any value at all, your personality will rise above them to create something unique.

AU: What are the messages or themes BUM explores?

Mostly heartbreak (from me)... Andrew (the other main singer/songwriter) also delves into feelings of longing for something more, an outward search for a greater life beyond a small town. He uses the theme of music as something magical to express this.

AU: What inspires you about the Victoria music and art scenes?

RN: I love the diversity of expression in this town. And the quality, it’s continually astounding to me the bands and artists who have come from here.

It’s weird and it’s honest.

AU: How many albums did you release? RN: We released three records: *Wanna Smash Sensation*, a long-EP called *I Am Superwoman*, and a full-length live album called *Shake Town!* (not our title) that was recorded in Madrid, Spain.

AU: Who did the artwork for your album covers? What’s the mascot character’s name and inspiration?

RN: Different people did different covers. The ones you are probably thinking of, the ones that are the most well known, were drawn by an incredible artist named Pat McEown. He now lives in Montreal, and is a hugely respected comic book artist. He’s one of the most truly talented people I’ve ever met and we were lucky to get him. The reason we did was because he used to draw a comic for the UVic paper in the 90s. Kev, our bass player, noticed that in one issue, a character was wearing a BUM t-shirt in a few of the panels. We had only played a few shows at this time, and didn’t even HAVE T-shirts, so we were blown away that this guy referenced us. Kev got in contact and he designed the fist single cover, which featured the character who is “officially” named Ugly Dick

Tater. We call him “The Green Guy.” We had only given him the suggestion that we wanted to be depicted as cartoon characters, like the cover of The Pooh Sticks *Great White Wonder* album. Pat came up with the monster instead, god bless him.

AU: Why did the band originally part ways and what brought you back together again recently?

RN: I left the band immediately after we got back from Spain in 1994. I was losing faith in my abilities as a songwriter and performer, and questioning if I really wanted to have anything to do with “the music business.” It barely wanted anything to do with me so I guess the feeling was mutual...

Graham, our drummer, carried on for another ten months to a year, but then Andrew and Kev moved to Vancouver. There they hooked up with Terry Russell (ex-SLOW) and Nick Thomas from The Smugglers. The four of them released the album *Make It Or Break It*, toured Spain, and then called it a day.

We were approached to reform for the 2014 Rifflandia festival, and things seemed in place for this to be a fun thing to do. It was, and is.

AU: You recently opened for Chixdiggit, but there was a time when they used to open for you. Can you tell us about when you first met the Chixdiggit guys?

RN: We met Chixdiggit as we drove East on our first (and only) cross-Canada tour. They were young and full of energy, and KJ Jansen was adorably cute. He proclaimed that we (the two bands) would be friends, but I was jealous of his good looks. When they hit the stage that night in Calgary, with American flags draped over their amps like The MC5, they proceeded to open with Cheap Trick’s “Hello There,” which they killed! My jealousy turned to envy. This guy was my new nemesis. He was younger than me, faster than me and cuter than me - he had to go. Turns out KJ was right though, the guys in that band are just superb people and he is one of my best friends to this day. Hunky bastard...

AU: What was the high point of BUM’s music career back in the day.

RN: When we arrived in Spain in 1994, while driving into Madrid from the airport, we noticed HUGE posters lining the highway. There were three bands being promoted for upcoming shows: Aerosmith, Bryan Adams and BUM. We had no idea what we were about to face there, not an inkling. It was incredible.

AU: Any chance you will ever resurrect your Misfits cover band, The Astro-Zombies? What were you’re thoughts on Danzig’s return for the two Riot Fest shows?

RN: There is ZERO chance that The Astro-Zombies will ever play a show again. You can’t fathom what toll it took on me physically and mentally to mount that show. One

of the many instances in my life where I took things way too far...

I wasn’t excited about the Riot Fest shows. I saw Danzig and Doyle do Misfits songs in 2004. To me, that’s as good as what these two shows recently were. Better, actually because I can’t stand Jerry Only. Now, if they had brought back an original drummer like Googy or Mr Jim, I would have probably flown down to see one of the shows, at least. Lombardo was amazing, though. That was the best the *Earth AD* stuff has ever sounded.

AU: What’s on the horizon for BUM?

RN: Tough to say. As I mentioned at the top of the article, I am in flux. My relationship to music seems to be changing. My relationship to the world seems to be changing. I don’t know if the change is permanent (like Tom Sawyer), but it might be. We have a few new songs we are working on when we are able to get together. Kev lives in Vancouver and Graham lives in Nanaimo, so convening for practice is VERY difficult and costly.

We are mostly trying to keep it fun for everyone, I guess that’s what’s ahead for us: finding ways to keep it a good time.

AU: Words of advice for mutant children starting bands in their parents basements?

RN: Tough one. Manage your expectations would be one thing. The industry has changed so much, and I mean the whole of the industry; from the smallest basement and house shows to mid-level club gigs, all the way to corporately produced and promoted music. It’s extremely difficult to get noticed and produce anything of note today. Making a living playing music is more of a pipe dream than it’s been since before the 1940s, I’d say. That being said, be fearless. Be savage. Be honest and expansively expressive. The days of half-measures in creating and performing art is over. There are more than enough people doing homogenized, “safe” music.

That doesn’t mean I want people to only do extreme music - even if you are a pop band, shoot beyond your abilities and make something bigger than yourselves and bigger than the people standing at the foot of your stage. We need something to look up to and strive for. Be that, in whatever form your art takes.

AU: Promo Zone - Website, Facebook, where can people check out your music?

RN: BUM is on Bandcamp, bummusic2.bandcamp.com, and we’re on Facebook. My band The Suitesixteen in on Facebook if you want info about my upcoming solo album, or if you want to get a hold of me.

Andrew’s band, Budokan is also on Facebook and Bandcamp: <https://budokanrocks.bandcamp.com/>



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Subculture

By wendythirteen

Moving on again. "Subculture" was released from *Beatroute*, and I have been thrown out of another venue. Boom. Boom. It doesn't matter how much work you put in, or the credibility you build, it could all end suddenly.

I've experienced that at the hands of the city, coming to work and having a closure notice plastered on the front door of the Cobes. Apparently, when you share a bar with the 'strippers' of the day shift in Y2K, you get to serve a Liquor License suspension for 'fellatio' in front of a Liquor Inspector.

I've experienced that at the hands of the slumlords who saw Olympic-sized dollar signs in their eyes and evicted me, and now with the lipstick-on-a-pig developers who fantasize about well-heeled yuppies gracing their soon-to-be-Italian-chic DTES pub.

Take any rundown, hole-in-the-wall dive bar on the verge of getting shut down by the city and cops. Run thousands of punks and metalheads

through the doors, double their liquor sales, gain the attention of journalists, students and a social media presence. Hold it together with duct tape, a coat of black paint, and the wonderful capabilities of a volunteer army and presto! All of a sudden in the overlords' eyes, this is a desirable, functioning venue worthy of way more money and a supposedly better clientele than us heathens who got it to that point. All the grunt work is done. All the drug dealers and users are chased out courtesy of loud, heavy music and a cover charge.

Just call me the Accidental Venue Gentrifier. Occupy a bar mainstreamers won't touch. Turn it around. Get thrown out. Sometimes I feel like I'm on a venue hamster wheel.

This is where you learn how to relocate shows quickly. I had asked to keep my fully-booked calendar of shows honoured through mid-December at Funky's, but was

told that would only happen if I worked for free. So I decided, FUCK THAT. Why should I continue to make money for people that obviously don't appreciate the work I put in for years. Thankfully, I have good friends working at other venues, and Pats Pub and SBC stepped up for me big time. I even managed to get future booking dates at Lana Lou's and Pats Pub. Being of no fixed address means I have fewer dates to work with, but for the time being that'll be enough.

When I was looking for venues after the Cobes debacle, I kept getting "no" from the powers that be. The reasoning was that there was a moratorium on liquor licenses in the Downtown Eastside. I took the Funky's job for peanuts with the former slumlords, just to keep the shows rolling, and all of a sudden every Tom, Dick and Harry had a fucking craft beer 'tasting room', store or eatery in the DTES. I guess my timing was off by a year.

I ended up just staying vision-shackled, because around about year two, they actually made the great decision of hiring Rockerchick Sheri as the manager. We meshed really well, were rolling along, and the place got painted black except for

the yucky pink bathroom. After the new corporate overlords fucked with her a year ago and she left, it was never the same. They also culled all the staff and regulars from the bar, too. It sucked walking into work with tumbleweeds blowing through the place due to poor management decisions. Their prerogative. "How to run a bar into the ground 101" going on there. Pickles win.

There's a certain rebelliousness that overtakes our scene after being disregarded and tossed into the gutter. When Funky's bar pickles were absconded at a gig after I was terminated, it turned into a giant episode of Picklegate. The overlords of Funky's messaged, threatening to call the cops. The drunk, hungry punks ate the pickles, drank the brine and made a prank pickle terrorist video and ransom note Facebook cover photo. I laughed and replaced the pickle jar and pickles. Total cost of the missing pickles was less than the price to get into a gig. I suggested they remove the new pickles from their spot on the bar for the final punk show. They did. I remember people taking grimy wall tiles out of the men's can at the Cobes during the final week. Souvenir options for venue memories are weird.

Being sober for three years now, I'm not sure

I'd want to fire up another bar. Courtesy of the Provincial Government entering the modern age, I may not have to. I could open a 'Shit for Sale' store / Art Gallery and throw shows legally while dispensing the liquor lifeblood. I'm really stuck on our subculture having a legal space. I couldn't do the fly-by-night, illegal venue action. My psyche likes having a home base you can count on. We'll see how long I can throw shows in different places, but throw them I will. Gig whack-a-mole. I'm sticking around. I appreciate everyone that reached out. My next chapter is upon us.

To fill my extra free time, I've undertaken the mammoth task of sifting through 17 years of gig posters I have stored away. I've also recovered as much as I can digitally from old computer hard drives and uploading sites. I seem to be stuck post 2004 for digital archives. Everything before that I will unearth in physical copies of old show posters. I might have to get my hands on a giant scanner or photo taking system. See you around, Vancity!

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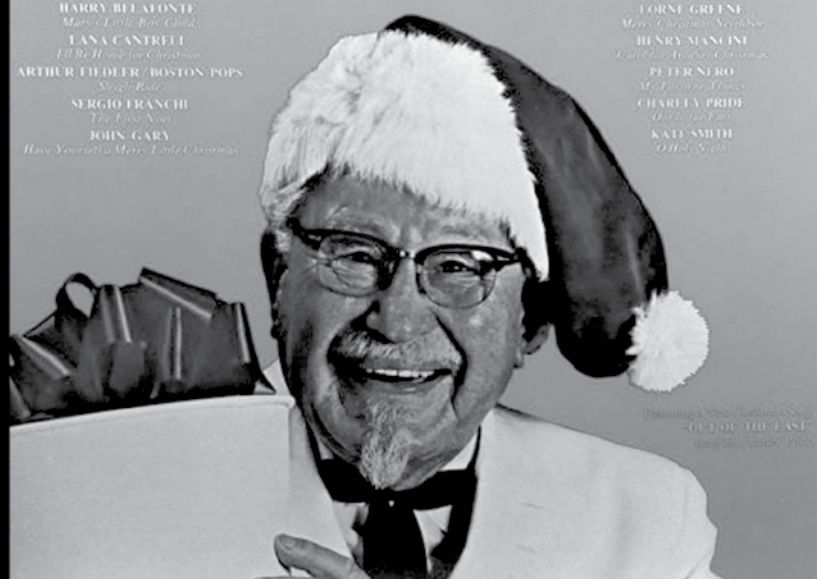
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A Wilhelm Scream

Interview by Stepan Soroka

As far as melodic, technical punk rock goes, A Wilhelm Scream have been leading the pack since their 2001 debut, *The Benefits of Thinking Out Loud*. Now, with five full-lengths under their belt, including 2014's exceptionally ripping *Partycrasher*, A Wilhelm Scream have firmly established themselves as a pillar of progression, melody and technicality within the punk scene. If you've ever had the pleasure of seeing them live, then you know that it is basically impossible to not enjoy their infectious, high-energy performances. We caught up with guitarist and lyricist Trevor Reilley ahead of their Canadian tour with Ontario's Protest the Hero.

AU: In previous interviews you've listed poets and playwrights, such as David Mamet and William Blake, as some of your main inspirations for songwriting. Can you elaborate on the relationship between literature and punk rock?

Trevor: For me, especially in my formative years as a lyricist, I took big inspiration from the types of writers and filmmakers that tapped into the darker side of human nature. The film noir style, detective novel-type stuff. Raymond Chandler, Robert Towne. Mamet, he writes the way people around me speak, but beyond the clever turns of phrase and tough guy talk, there's the vulnerability of the human condition. Shane Black, same thing. Characters talking shit to each

other. Real life. A sort of, "me against the world," type of vibe that I really, at age 20, was drawn to, particularly with the type of music we were creating. For me, this is how literature and punk rock connected. The more I read, the more I wrote, and the more I figured out what I was all about, and with that, I wrote with confidence and with an independent spirit.

Punk rock inspires independent thinking. Critical and creative thinking and literary writers, spoken word, singer-songwriters are cut from that same cloth, same DNA, and inspire feelings in others. The real good stuff will make you feel every sort of way, like a Blake Schwarzenbach. He's one of the greatest.

AU: Any reading recommendations for our readers?

Trevor: William Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*. Short poems, juxtaposing the childlike innocent point of view and the hardened, experienced world weary view. Had a big impact on me and my writing.

AU: You've also said that Propagandhi is a major influence for you. As you are about to tour through Propagandhi's homeland, can you tell us what your favourite album of theirs is?

Trevor: I'm a really big fan, so whenever they come out with a new record, it is my favorite, truly. *So Failed States*. That band never ever disappoints. I really think they are the best band in the world.

AU: Favourite thing about touring Canada?

Trevor: Sounds silly, but I really like stopping off at Tim Hortons for coffee breaks. That ritual. It's the first thing I think of. But really, it's the shows. Canadian music fans are amongst the most passionate and awesome, like most Canadian

musicians usually tend to be.

AU: You've just played The Fest in Gainesville, Florida. Tell us a bit about that. For someone who has never been to The Fest, why should they check it out?

Trevor: It's hundreds of good bands playing all over a mostly empty college town (the Gators play out of town that weekend). And it's just a great time, an awesome vacation. Fairly inexpensive down in Florida. They got this app that tells you where every band is playing and you set up your schedule on it, it's cool. The folks that work the fest are wonderful, hard-working and down to earth people, there's no fights, all love. Highly recommended.

AU: You guys are a ripping live band. One of my favourite parts about seeing you play is that everyone seems to be having an absolute blast on stage. What are some of the factors that play into a successful AWS performance?

Trevor: Thank you! We have a great time, and we don't try to hide it, that's for sure. We have been at it for a long time, and we feel lucky to still be able to do this. As long as people still show up to rock out, then the show is a success already. We treat playing like it's a celebration, because it is.

AU: You put out several releases on Nitro Records. How important was Nitro to the success of AWS, and what was it like sharing the roster with so many legendary bands?

Trevor: Nitro kicked things off for us, and invested a lot into our band, which never sold a lot of records. I feel like they were very proud to have us on their roster. They really made us feel wanted and they supported whatever we wanted to do artistically. When we were on the label, AFI and The Vandals and Guttermouth and others weren't there anymore, so it was like a youth movement over there with new bands, and before we knew it, we were the more experienced act on the label. We really worked hard and just stayed on tour all the time. I look back fondly on the Nitro days.

AU: You guys have been consistently putting out albums for years and touring seemingly non-stop around the world. Is AWS a full-time

gig for you? And how do you manage to find a balance between the band and your personal or professional lives?

Trevor: It still pretty much is still the main gig for most of us. We all have things on the side, Mike and I do recording, Nick does drum building, everyone has work on the side that we do, kids, and as we get older it does get more challenging to balance it all. My wife and I just bought a building that we are renovating into two apartments and a new studio and that takes up every moment of my free time. Sometimes there doesn't seem to be enough hours in a day. But the end result is going to be a huge benefit to the future of our band and our music, so the music really is still the main focus.

AU: How did you first get into punk rock and how has your relationship with the music changed as you grow older?

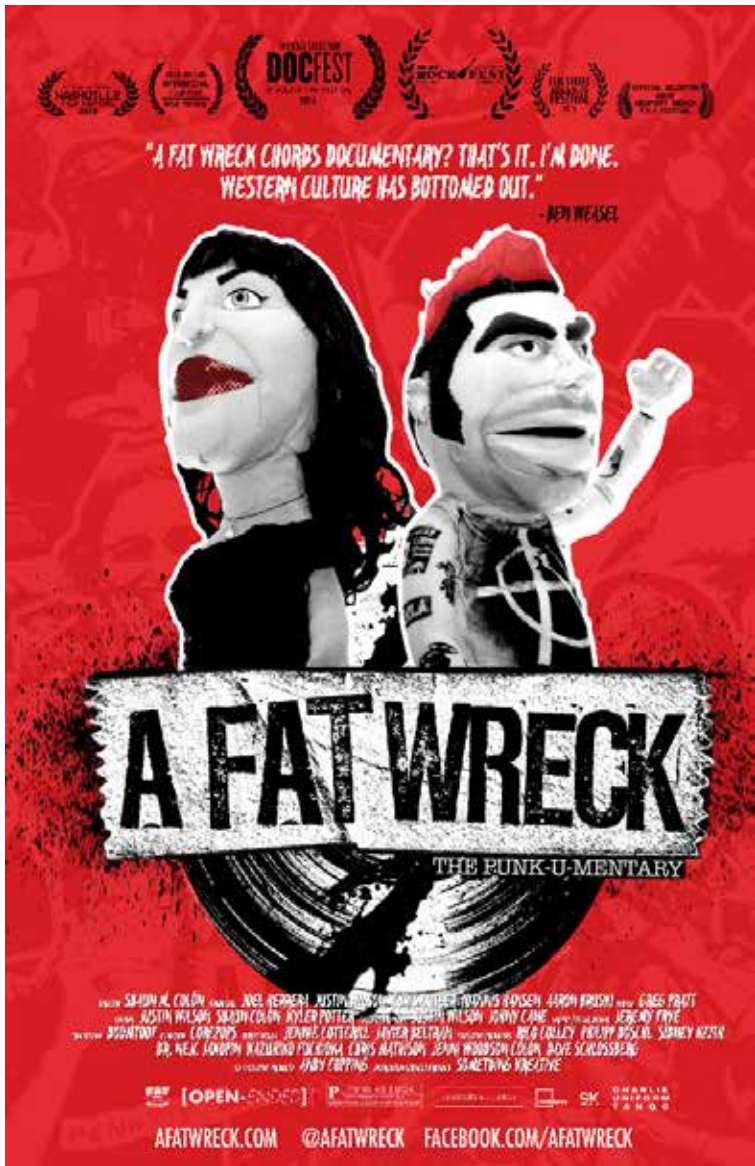
Trevor: I got into music in general watching my dad in his band and my uncle in his, playing gigs they would sneak me into. Punk rock came about for me without knowing what it really was. My dad was playing me the Clash since I was a little kid. Buzzcocks. Ramones. I didn't know there was a name for this genre of music until I heard Dead Kennedys and NOFX in high school. Bad Brains. Operation Ivy. Rancid, Screeching Weasel. "Punk rock? Oh word, yeah I've been listening to this stuff for years! I guess I'm a punk rocker." Haha.

AU: What can we expect from A Wilhelm Scream following this tour?

Trevor: I anticipate us getting together to work on new material. I will certainly be deep in construction for the new studio in the early new year, so when everything aligns we will be recording new material hopefully at some point next year. And of course, more touring.

facebook.com/awilhelmscream/

PHOTO CREDIT: Chris Robinson



A Fat Wreck The Punk-u-mentary

Interview by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today and what are you all about?

Greg Pratt: I'm Greg Pratt; I'm a journalist and life-long punk and metal fan from Victoria.

AU: When did you decide you wanted to be a writer?

GP: It happened really naturally; I was doing a metal radio show at CFUV and they asked if I wanted to write some CD reviews for *Offbeat*, their newspaper/magazine at the time. I thought, 'Wow, they're going to give me a CD to write about it?' Seemed too good to be true. One thing led to the next and I approached bigger magazines, started interviewing bands, and slowly became a music journalist. Along the way I started doing other non-music-related writing as well. Some of it was just work, but some was, I felt, important, taking on local issues and writing stories that, I hope, had some kind of impact.

AU: What's on your writing resume?

GP: I write regularly for *Decibel*, *Alternative Press*, *Braveworlds*, *Exclaim!*, *Substream*, *Outburn*, *Island Parent*... I've also written for *Today's Parent*, *Wired*, *Douglas*, and others.

AU: What's your day job? Nexus? Are you a teacher? If so what, and where can people take your class?

GP: Yeah, my day job is managing editor at *Nexus* newspaper at Camosun College; we're the independent student newspaper there. It's a totally killer job, the students rule, and there's always something exciting going on. I also teach continuing education classes through UVic and Camosun, mainly on writing, but I do teach one on the history of heavy metal, which is always a blast. It's not being offered currently, but if people keep their eyes on the UVic and Camosun continuing ed calendars they'll see when it pops up again. I crank up Assück louder in

the class than any other university prof.

AU: How did you first get involved with the Fat Wreck Chords documentary project?

GP: I got a message through Facebook from Shaun, the director and mainman of the project. He had read a story I wrote for *Exclaim!* that was a really detailed history of Propagandhi, who are just such an amazing band and have had such a huge impact on my life. He thought I'd be the guy to write a documentary him and his crew wanted to do on Fat Wreck Chords. They were in Texas, and I'm here in Victoria, BC, but it all worked out great. Working with Shaun has been amazing; dude's like a brother to me now.

AU: How many interviews, footage, travel, and time was

involved to make the doc a reality?

GP: Oh, man... I think around 120 interviews, a good two and a half years of filming, several trips to California, as well as tons of regional filming. Like any doc, just a ton of stuff.

AU: Has it been fun traveling to screen the film? Where has it screened? Crowd response?



GP: It's so fun and so nerve-wracking. I generally don't take criticism of my writing well, so to sit in a movie theatre for 88 minutes watching people watch this movie is super intense for me. But, it's also just an amazing, once-in-a-lifetime kinda experience, too. Crowd response has generally been great at the one-off screenings, because it's the punk rockers who come out. The film fests are tamer, smaller crowds, not punkers, a bit less lively. It's screened all over the USA and Canada and overseas too; England, Australia... we've been really lucky with having rad people offer to set up screenings for us all over the place. Our San Francisco premiere with Fat Mike and Erin from the label there, as well as dudes from Bracket and No Use for a Name, was just surreal; playing this movie for them that we made basically about their lives... really crazy experience, but a really rad one.

AU: When did you first come across Fat Wreck Chords back in the day?

GP: When the first Lagwagon 7" came out, I was doing a radio show at CFUV at UVic here, and saw it there. Spun it and it just changed everything: it combined the metal I loved with a melodic and emotional touch that metal doesn't usually have. After that, the first Lagwagon LP and the first Propagandhi LP just totally changed my life.

AU: Are there any Fat Wreck Chords releases that had a lasting effect on you?

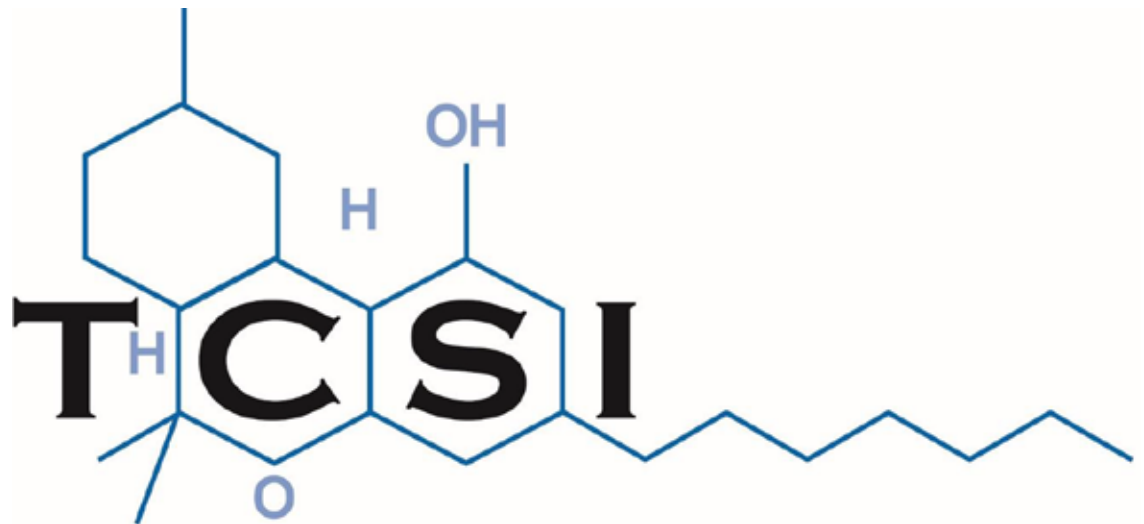
GP: Those two I just mentioned, and the second Lagwagon LP, that one really inspired me as a drummer. The third Lagwagon really added in even more melodic elements and I just loved that. Later, the *Against Me! Searching for a Former Clarity* album was another game-changer for me, and even more current, the *Banner Pilot* albums really

hit me hard. Excellent stuff. The Fat stuff has for the most part aged really well; even the oldest releases still move me the way they used to, which is remarkable.

AU: Was this your first time writing a documentary, and what did the process involve?

GP: Yes, I had no aspirations to be in film. But the

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nuts and bolts of it weren't much different than my work as a journalist: think of questions to ask people, ask them, look at their answers on a computer screen, put it all together to make a, hopefully, great story. The scale of it was just way larger this time, and it was a lot more team work, which, as a writer, I'm not entirely used to. Luckily, those guys were gentle with me, and put up with both my journalistic pushiness and Canadian politeness very well.

AU: How did you maintain an unbiased view throughout the process?

GP: It's important to note that Fat weren't involved in this; they didn't fund it, didn't have any creative control. We approached them as I'd approach anyone I'm writing a story about. Having said that, I never tried to hide the fact that I have tons of respect for what they do, but I also really, really wanted to get dissenting viewpoints in there. We didn't get much, but we put in what we got, and we always tried to get criticisms from people to try to make it at least somewhat well-rounded.

AU: What bands are most prominently featured in the movie?

GP: We focused on the first five, so Lagwagon, No Use For A Name, Propagandhi, Good Riddance, and Strung Out, as well as NOFX. We've got lots of others in there, but as far as screen time goes, those get more than other bands.

AU: Who was your favourite person to interview for this project?

GP: The main interview with Fat Mike was a really neat one for me. It was a couple hours, and it almost didn't happen and he, as always, was just totally honest and forthcoming.

AU: Was there one band or person you really wanted in the film, that you just couldn't get?

GP: Ben Weasel of Screeching Weasel. We really wanted him in there to provide some dissenting opinion of the label, but he wouldn't do it unless we paid him. As a journalist, there's no way that happens; no one was paid to be in this movie (we paid to use people's music, yes; but no one gets paid to be interviewed). It's a shame; I really would have liked to have had him in there.

AU: How did you get the Ben Weasel quote for the poster?

GP: He was talking about the movie on Twitter and said that. We thought it was kinda funny so used it. And, no, we didn't pay him to use it. Look, the guy wrote *My Brain Hurts*, one of the best punk albums of our time. I'll gladly buy him a beer for that some day, but we're not paying him



to be in the movie.

AU: Essential Fat Wreck Chords listening list.

GP: It changes a bit day to day, but Propagandhi's *Potemkin City Limits* is always number one, Lagwagon's *Trashed or Hoss*, every other Propagandhi album, Banner Pilot's *Resignation Day*, Against Me!'s *Searching for a Former Clarity...* The Loved Ones put out a couple of really fantastic records on Fat, and the classic Fat releases all still sound great. First Good Riddance album, second or third Strung Out records, the Face to Face album... can't beat this stuff.

AU: What did you take away from this whole experience?

GP: Not what I thought I would. I had no idea starting this project that Fat was such an ethically sound label. I had always heard rumours they paid their bands good (only in the music industry would something like that be whispered in hushed tones), but I didn't realize just how they operated. It's honestly been a very inspiring reminder to me that it's possible to survive as a business without being a crook. Also, the sincerity of these bands, and all the bands in punk that I love, is something that really I can't stress the importance of enough. If you're making any kind of art to make money or as a career choice, it's going to show; music made for sincere purposes, even if it's not entirely your thing, is always going to be the best kind of music.

AU: Tell us about the band you were in called

Let's Put the X in Sex.

GP: Oh, Christ. Okay, a long time ago I was in that band, and our deal was we would take classic metal and rock songs and sort of destroy them in a grindcore fashion, with a prominent keyboardist. Sounds stupid, and it was, but it was kinda the best thing ever, too. Recorded documents do exist...

AU: Any other film related projects on the horizon?

GP: No. But I'd like to. Given that I kind of accidentally stumbled into film, as this one was wrapping up I wasn't thinking about my next project. Now that this one is out I do find myself wondering what to do next. I have a couple ideas, but it's just kinda me all alone up here in cold Canada now staring at my computer screen...

AU: Words of advice for aspiring writers?

GP: Be honest, always. That's gotta be the most important thing as a journalist. Just be honest. And if they tend to ruin your day, don't read the comments; if your editor keeps inviting you back for more work, you're doing something right.

AU: Where can people get the movie?

GP: We're at afatwreck.com; you can order stuff there and get all kinds of info over there.

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Grim Reaper

Interview with vocalist Steve Grimmett

By Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: I'm so stoked on that show in Vancouver, I was telling everyone how awesome it was!

Steve Grimmett: Yeah it was a great show.

AU: Fuckin' blew me away, man. That was so awesome of you guys to all do the meet-and-greet at the end, it's greatly appreciated.

SG: We always do that, because without the fans, we can't do this. We appreciate that and that's what we do.

I'm concerned, there's no need for that at all... because they've already paid to be there and see the show.

AU: Let's make this official. Who are we talking to and what are you most infamous for?

SG: You're talking to Steve Grimmett of Grim Reaper, I'm infamous for lots of things, but the one song that stands out is obviously "See You in Hell."

AU: It's such a killer song. I feels it's kind of a positive message, when you say "I'll See You In Hell, My Friend."

SG: What it is though, it's actually a story from the Bible about the Temptation of Christ. So that's what it was all about, and not what some people



AU: All these bands are trying to charge hundreds of dollars for meet-and-greets now.

SG: That's an insult as far as

think it is. But, either way, people love it, they go crazy when they hear it, and it's got nothing to do with the Devil or anything like that, so it's all cool.

AU: Give me a brief history of the band.

SG: Grim Reaper was actually a rival band in my area, I was in a band called Medusa at the time, for one reason or another, my band split up, and then a month later, I had a phone call from Nick Bowcott, "I'm putting together the original members of the band, and I'd like you to join us and sing." We met up, had a few beers, and decided it was a good idea. Then stuff started to happen for us. We won a local talent competition, 24 hours in a 24 track studio. I also did a single, "Chained and Desperate", for a band called Chateaux who were on Ebony Records. So I took Grim Reaper's demo to Ebony Records and six weeks after that, we were signed to them and recording *See You In Hell*. And the rest is history.

AU: All your album covers are so deadly. Who did the artwork?

SG: The first one was done by a guy called Gary Young, I'm just trying to remember the guy who did the second one right now, it was a different person. And the third one, *Rock You To Hell* was done by the same artist, Gary Young. The fourth album is somebody different again.

AU: I just listened to the new album *Walking in the Shadows*, it's solid.

SG: Thank you! We're getting some really good reviews on it, and that's really good news, a lot of people are liking it

AU: How did you come up with your singing style?

SG: I don't know, is the answer, because I've never been trained, never had lessons. I've just been able to do it. Basically, the music I like has melody, and I guess that's where it comes from. I don't particularly like death metal and what I call "vomit bands", some of it's okay, but I do much prefer melody.

AU: Growing up in England, you must have heard Judas Priest or someone else that inspired you?

SG: That was my first inspiration, to be perfectly honest, I'd been singing before, just singing in

my bedroom. And Rob Halford was the first real touch of trying to be able to sing like somebody, and I found out I could quite easily do it, so that



was good. But the reason I sing is because I'm a very huge Elton John fan, and if it wasn't for him, I wouldn't be singing.

AU: Most of your songs are about Hell, and Rocking in Hell... one thing on the internet said you were going to make an album that was called *Nothing Whatever To Do About Hell*, is that true?

SG: Somebody suggested that... no, we were going to call this album *From Hell*, we have a song on there that's called "From Hell," but when we were in the studio, we decided that *Walking in the Shadows* just sounded a lot more fresh, and that's why it's the title. It still has the element of Hammer House of Horrors, which literally all the songs are based on in the first place.

AU: Kind of gothic, eh?

SG: I'll tell you for

one, "See You in Hell", we thought it was a great song so that's why we called it that. Then things started to change in the music industry and to try and get some airplay, we wrote *Fear No Evil*, but that didn't work. So we decided to go back to the way we were in the first place, then *Rock You To Hell* came out... then this new album, it was a bit of a task really, because I wanted it to be the fourth album, with different musicians entirely,



it was a challenge to go back 30 years to how you used to write songs, and to go back 30 years to how you used to record them, because we've recorded that exactly the same way we recorded all the other albums, in the studio, live drums, live bass, live guitar, all mic'd up, no sampled sounds on it whatsoever. What you hear is what we recorded, so that's part of the reason that people like the sound of Grim Reaper, they like how it all comes together. So you can go on using computer drums, you can do all that, we could have done that, but then you will not get what you are trying to achieve, you are not doing old-school rock, and that's what we wanted.

AU: Now that you mentioned Hammer Horror, I'm understanding more about the songs...

SG: "Wrath of the Ripper," is a story about Jack The Ripper, which Hammer House of Horrors did, *Dracula*, all of that stuff, that's basically what it was all based on, I still go into that, although a few more of songs this time are probably a bit more personal, but it's still there. *Walking in the Shadows* is still out at night on your own, walking in the shadows and you can hear shit and you turn around and nothing is there, that's what it's all about. There is nothing to do with Devil worship or anything like that, which we got accused of in the 80s, but it never was.

AU: It's horror movie rock, "Night of the Vampire," that could be the title of a movie.

SG: And there you have it, that's about Dracula, that's what it's about.

AU: What was the song you did for a soundtrack for a naked lesbian movie?

SG: Oh, "Lust for Freedom." Yeah we did write that for a movie, it's in the movie, if you can find it, it was a cult movie made by the same people that make *Class of Nuke 'Em High*, Troma Inc, was the company, they asked us to write a song for the album, so we wrote that song from them, and they asked for the title track of the album, *Rock You to Hell*, and they extensively used those songs throughout the whole movie, and for our payment, they did us a video for *Rock You To Hell*, so it was all quite an amicable thing.

AU: You had all these music videos back in the day, Grim Reaper was even on Beavis and Butthead, you really made an impact.

SG: Yeah it was funny actually, because the first video, "See You In Hell," was put out on MTV and they were only going to put it out once, and they put a questionnaire up after it, to say, "Is this the sort of thing you want to see on MTV?" thinking that they would get a massive "No," and they wouldn't have to bother with it, but then the response was so massive that they put it on maximum rotation, seven times a day, seven days a week, for seven weeks. That's how we hit the scene. Then *Beavis and Butthead*, the producer of the show, he put it on because he was a Grim Reaper fan, and then we got to meet up with the guy and he thought we were going to kill him. But we loved the idea. We got on really well with the guy, so much so that we are the only band to this day that had all of their music videos on *Beavis and Butthead*, people say to me,



"Don't you think it's really cruel of them, they're making fun of you," but there are far more and far worse scathing attacks on bands than us, and they did it to everybody. It wasn't just us. It's like their thing, whatever, we loved it.

AU: It was just more exposure.

SG: Absolutely, it's still being shown today. They still air the whole series of *Beavis and Butthead* today, from 20-odd years ago. I'm still seeing the royalties from it, thank you very much.

AU: I understand you also did an album with Onslaught?

SG: I did do one album for Onslaught, I did *In Search of Sanity*.

AU: Did you put out an album with your first band Medusa as well?

SG: There is one out, yep. Did that, I've done Onslaught, and I have my own band, Lionsheart... oh, and Steve Grimm Band, there are albums for those as well. Four Lionsheart albums, one Steve Grimm, one Onslaught, and four Grim Reaper, and Medusa and Chateaux was before Grim Reaper.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans of metal, rock, and horror?

SG: We would like to thank all of our fans in Canada, we did five shows in Canada, and we had great turnouts and great fans, we loved to meet them, they were fantastic. Hopefully next year we'll be doing the same rounds again, so that'll be really cool. Come out and see us, thank you so much for your support.

AU: Bonus question... I missed why you

showed your ass onstage the other night.

SG: One of the songs I said was about me, it a song called "Reach Out," and basically I had a lot of major back problems a few years ago, and I had surgery... in the two years from when it started to when I had the surgery, I got hooked on prescription drugs, and I mentioned the fact that I've now got a 17-inch crack, from my ass halfway up my back where they opened me up to fuse my spine



together. Then somebody asked me to let them see it, so I was in the right frame of mind to drop my trousers and show everybody! So yeah, just wait another year and you can see my ass again next year!

grimreaperofficial.co.uk





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The Dwarves

Interview by Billy Hopeless

Okay, so fuck those annoying little elves this Christmas, I've decided to present to you a conversation with one of the naughtiest Dwarves I've ever mined lumps of coal with. The crucifixion is now kiddies, let's go way out with the unrepentant spirit of fuck-you-up-and-get-high, Mr. Blag Dahlia

Absolute Underground: Hey brother, it's been a few years since we last shot clams in Van; you're now returning to the lowest mainland on December 3rd. What's new with you and the Dwarves?

Blag Dahlia: I guess the big news is that we have most of a new record recorded! Rex Everything, Fresh Prince of Darkness, HeWhoCanNotBeNamed, Nick Oliveri and Black Josh Freese all had a bunch of bitching nasty hardcore tunes, and me and Sgt. Saltpeter had a bunch of bubblegum garage stuff, and



somehow this record appeared out of nowhere one weekend. It usually takes us forever. Expect it to drop by next fall, just in time for the school shootings. While you're at it, check out all the dirty pics at www.thedwarves.com.

AU: Well this time you're playing the birthplace of Vancouver punk, formerly known as The Smiling Buddha, which is now a killer skate ramp venue called SBC, right on historic Hastings Street. Tell our readers about the connection between The Dwarves and skateboarding!

BD: I fell off a skateboard the first time I rode one, and broke a beer bottle across my hand that severed some nerves, and still looks funky to this day. Therefore, skating is retarded!

AU: How about the Vancouver punk scene, any stories or local hoodlums that hold in your

career-ending attacks on the demolition derby circuit?

BD: We've always had fun in Vancouver, it's a great town. All I can remember is fucking a cute girl who was far too young for me in Vancouver, and really enjoying it immensely. There was also a girl who sounded like a cartoon character in Victoria, and we fucked for such a long time she finally just surrendered, tying her panties to my erection like a white flag and burst into tears.

My only experience with demolition derby was watching it on *Happy Days* with Pinky Tuscadero, who had a kind of rough, working class girl's face, but looked great in shorts.

AU: Now to current events, what do you think about Trump? And yes, I'm talking about Melania, of course.

BD: Melania is cute, but when in Slovenia, I prefer that slightly weird Eastern European face with the crooked teeth and haunted eyes that just screams 'abducted,' rather than the vapid 'trophy wife next door' look she sports. I would allow her to give me a hand job, but only if she admits her husband is an ignorant fascist with tiny hands and a comb-over. Oh, who am I kidding, I'd fuck her!

AU: Well, along with the whole Trump/Clinton show, I've noticed how it's got everybody pointing PC fingers and shouting, "That's degrading!" wildly. What is your opinion on this, and how will the Dwarves deal with it, considering the band's liberal free artistic style?

BD: The Dwarves are apolitical, meaning we don't take sides in the culture wars, we define them. That said, I'll gladly trade your dunderheaded 'Joey From Friends' PM for our power-hungry new Oompa Loompa-colored Moron-in-Chief.

AU: This is the Xmas issue, so I guess we'd better get some yule questions in here. Why does Santa use elves instead of dwarves?

BD: Because dwarves are mean and elves are

pliable, dwarves are unpredictable and elves are docile, dwarves are free and elves thrive in captivity. In short, (see what I did there?) dwarves rule!

AU: What is the strangest Xmas you've ever experienced?

BD: I've never spent it alone, but I'd like to try it sometime. What could make one feel sorrier for oneself than that? Bliss! I guess my favourite Xmas was in high school. Me and some friends stole the baby Jesus from our church's manger scene. My mom found it in the basement, and made me give it back, so I wrapped it in swaddling clothes, and pinned a note to it saying, "Please take care of our Saviour!" So when you see me in hell, don't be surprised, Billy! You shouldn't have killed that hooker by playing her Black Halos live bootlegs until her ears fell off.

AU: Please finish the following sentence: "It was the night before Christmas and backstage at the club..."

BD: Ballesteros grabbed cock with a rub-a-tug-tug The maple was gurgling with kids in the hall Poutine and Tim Horton's, an old toilet stall Where Billy got silly with Justin Trudeau Admitting, "Mon dieu, we're like France, but with snow."

So suck on my dick like an old hockey puck This interview's over, Blag don't give a fuck!

AU: If any of the little Whos in Van-who-ville wanted to bring you an early Xmas present to the show, what's on your naughty list?

BD: I had a great three-way in Ottawa once. This time, I want a four-way!

AU: Finally the most important question of all, did you like the new Star Wars?

BD: I didn't give a fuck about *Star Wars* when I was ten. Now *Springbreakers*, that's a movie!

www.thedwarves.com



Randy Stubbs

Interview by Teagan Taylor

Randy Stubbs is a screen printer, painter, graphic designer, and entrepreneur from Victoria.

Absolute Underground: What sparked your interest in art?

RS: During high school, taking an art course, I figured well, I could get a free grade out of this, it's not going to be hard... that's when I realized I had a talent, an ability that other people don't... which was my ticket to say, "I am good at this, I can do this."

AU: Where did you take it from there?

RS: I did mainly personal stuff for a few years after high school before attending Victoria College of Art for a year. At the time the school itself was focused on what was called "Hard Edge" painting, so if you wanted to do anything realistic you were sort of... out of the loop. From there I went on to Camosun College for a two-year Diploma in Art course, which was a wide-ranging course:



painting, drawing, design, photography, sculpture, printmaking, art history... the entire gamut of being an artist. There, I was around a lot of different formats of art and people creating art, so it was a really great place to be an artist.

AU: How so?

RS: You've got people supporting you, to talk to and relate to... Outside an environment like that you can't exactly talk an artistic conversation. The constructive criticism really doesn't exist... There's a lot of "I don't like that," and the why is something stupid that doesn't help at all.

AU: Which artists have influenced you?

RS: Francis Bacon, Dali, Marcel Duchamp, Chuck Close...

AU: Musical influences?

RS: When I was a teenager I was listening to a lot of rock and roll, especially Alice Cooper... after that I got into more of a jazz-oriented thought pattern... I was hanging around with Bonehead from the Dayglos, but he was not Bonehead from the Dayglos, he was Brian, and he and his buddy Murray were in a jazz band called Airborne. It was a great influence, but then years later we all turned out as punk rockers. I still go to punk shows, especially if it's the Dayglos or Nomeansno, or somewhere I know I'm going to meet a bunch of old punk fans that I



haven't seen in years.

AU: What are your main mediums?

RS: Mainly, I work in Photoshop and Illustrator; they are the tools of the trade for a person involved in any sort of printmaking industry. Computers have made it possible to pull off an astonishing amount in a day

artwork-wise, to transfer into screen printing - amounts that if it wasn't for computers would take a week or two, 'cause some of the stuff is so detailed, there is no way you can pull it off without the computer, so it's the format I use constantly... I'll also create album covers in Photoshop for bands like The Dayglo Abortions, Explosive Rage Disorder, Frostbacks, Smoked Out Brains, Sasquatch Brothers, Meat Locker 7, Guess What Peter Did... and the list goes on and on. Especially punk rock and metal bands, I've done a lot of work that way.

AU: Other than digital work?

RS: I used to paint the backs of denim jackets for all the old punk rockers... I did a lot of the Dayglo ones with the exploding skulls, with the orange goop going everywhere... I did one with a picture of Bonehead playing drums, but it looked like he'd gouged his cheek out with the drumstick so half his skull was showing on it... I've done a lot of jackets with different album cover stuff... I also painted the original artwork for the Dayglo Abortions' album covers *Feed Us a Fetus*, *Corporate Whores*, and *Little Man in the Canoe*.

I still love painting, and every once in a while I get a chance to. So it's nice to get a chance to paint, even things like this Little Mermaid scene [he has painted various cartoons for a local Christmas

ARTIST PROFILE



display spanning over the last seventeen years]. I mainly use acrylics if I'm painting, because they dry fast, allowing me to create quickly... when I was learning oils, there wasn't Google, you couldn't YouTube the fucker...

You can visit Randy at 2639 Quadra Street in Victoria, at stylenprintshop.com or by emailing snp@shaw.ca. And if you're in Victoria this month, make sure to check out the corner of Grovesnor & Cedar Hill to see Randy's Christmas cut-outs on display.

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PEARS

Interview by Michael Luis

PEARS: delicious fruit, awesome band. The New Orleans quartet have only been around since 2014, but have already released two LPs, two EPs and have toured like globe-trotting maniacs. Their latest LP on Fat Wreck Chords, the exemplary *Green Star*, is one of the most exciting and eclectic punk records of 2016. It's an album marked by breakneck shifts from catchy pop-punk to face-clawing hardcore, thesaurus-emptying lyrics, and irreverent musical homages to the likes of Blink-182, The Misfits, and The Beatles. *Absolute Underground's* Michael Luis talked to frontman Zach Quinn before their Nov. 4th show supporting NOFX at Vancouver's Commodore Ballroom.

Absolute Underground: Having listened to both your LPs, it seems you guys are a band of juxtapositions. You have a silly name, but the music is pretty seriously put together. Musically, there are catchy poppy sections that are followed up by heavy aggressive parts. Is this a deliberate musical vision or something that just sort of happened?

Zach Quinn: I think it's fair to say that it's a bit of both. It's definitely a deliberate choice to do it,

but the choice that we made was rather than search for a particular sound, just try to use literally everything. There's a spectrum of different music that's happening in our heads. I think it's a really honest way to approach writing music simply because the spectrum of human emotion is wide. It seemed [with] the kinds of

records we wanted to make, it seemed dishonest for us or counterproductive to have everything be one way or the other. There needed to be those juxtapositions. Like, shit sucks but it can also be funny, you know? That's kind of the idea.

AU: I think there's a great juxtaposition in your lyrics too, because they can be quite absurdist.

ZQ: Yup.

AU: In however many decades of punk, there are so many lyrical tropes that are overused or played-out. Like, I enjoy songs about hating the cops as much as the next guy, but it seems like no lyrical ideas are off the table for you.

ZQ: There are definitely tropes that are tried and true, like staples for punk rock, and from the get-go, I wanted to avoid *all* of them. Not that there's anything wrong with songs about hating the cops or the government or whatever, but I thought it would be interesting to approach things from completely bizarre, different angles. Any time I had an idea where I was like, "This is really, really stupid," I'd go, "Well then I'm going to do it." [laughs] Especially if it was embarrassingly stupid, then that was even more pushed. Especially with [*Green Star*], the absurdist thing was absolutely the idea. I wanted to write this record that meant a lot to me. It presents itself as some sort of epic record, but I'm talking about bananas and cum and all of this bizarre shit. It's some sort of

absurdist epic thing that takes itself really seriously in a tongue-and-cheek way. I don't know, I thought that was kind of neat.

AU: It's present in the band's name too. I was first like, "A band named PEARS? That's ridiculous." But then I read that it's a metaphor, with pears being all the shitty things in the world, and bananas being the good things. I just think that's awesome because it's totally the kind of stupid joke that me and my friends would think is super profound.

ZQ: Right? The more inside joke anything is, the more excited I am to confuse people who are just reading the lyrics and have no clue.

AU: I want to ask you about Memaw's House. Where and what is Memaw's House?

ZQ: Memaw's House is my grandmother's house where I grew up in the St. Roch neighbourhood in New Orleans. Me and all my friends - she was like the "cool grandma" - so we were partying there from when I was like 15 and on. I guess we don't party there as much anymore because we have shit to do or more shit to do anyway. Memaw is like resident "cool grandma." She's everybody's grandma.

AU: And you guys have recorded there.

ZQ: We did some demo stuff there and practiced there in PEARS, and all our previous bands at different times. My father and my grandfather were both musicians. Three generations of shitty drunk people practicing at that house.

AU: I can relate, because all through high



school and university, all of my loud reggae and punk bands played in my parents' basement.

ZQ: Lucky to have family like that.

AU: So many people aren't so fortunate to have a parent, let alone a grandparent, who's like "Party, hang out, make music, be creative, have fun."

ZQ: It was like an asylum for me growing up. It was really necessary. I was a shitty kid with all sorts of emotional problems and I bounced from my parents' house to my grandparents' house and they were like, "Okay, we're going to let him flesh himself out." And I guess I have.

AU: You guys have toured all over the place, but what's a place that you feel you still need to play?

ZQ: I've been to Brazil in a band I've been in before. I want to go back to South America. Everywhere, man. North Korea!

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T: The tour is called Sunnyvale Liquor Tour.



Sunnyvale Liquor Tour

Interview by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to?

Tyrone Parsons: You're talking to Knucklehead, and I'm most infamous for spittin' burns and saying outlandish shit.

AU: You are Tyrone, from the *Trailer Park Boys*, or T, as J-Roc calls you.

T: A.k.a. Knucklehead.

AU: You're most famous for sayin', "You know what I'm sayin'?"

T: That's what I'm sayin'.

AU: So this is a solo thing, what's the tour called?

AU: And who else is on the tour?

T: Doug Crawford and the Secret Society, and Rude Dowg.

AU: And you're Knucklehead.

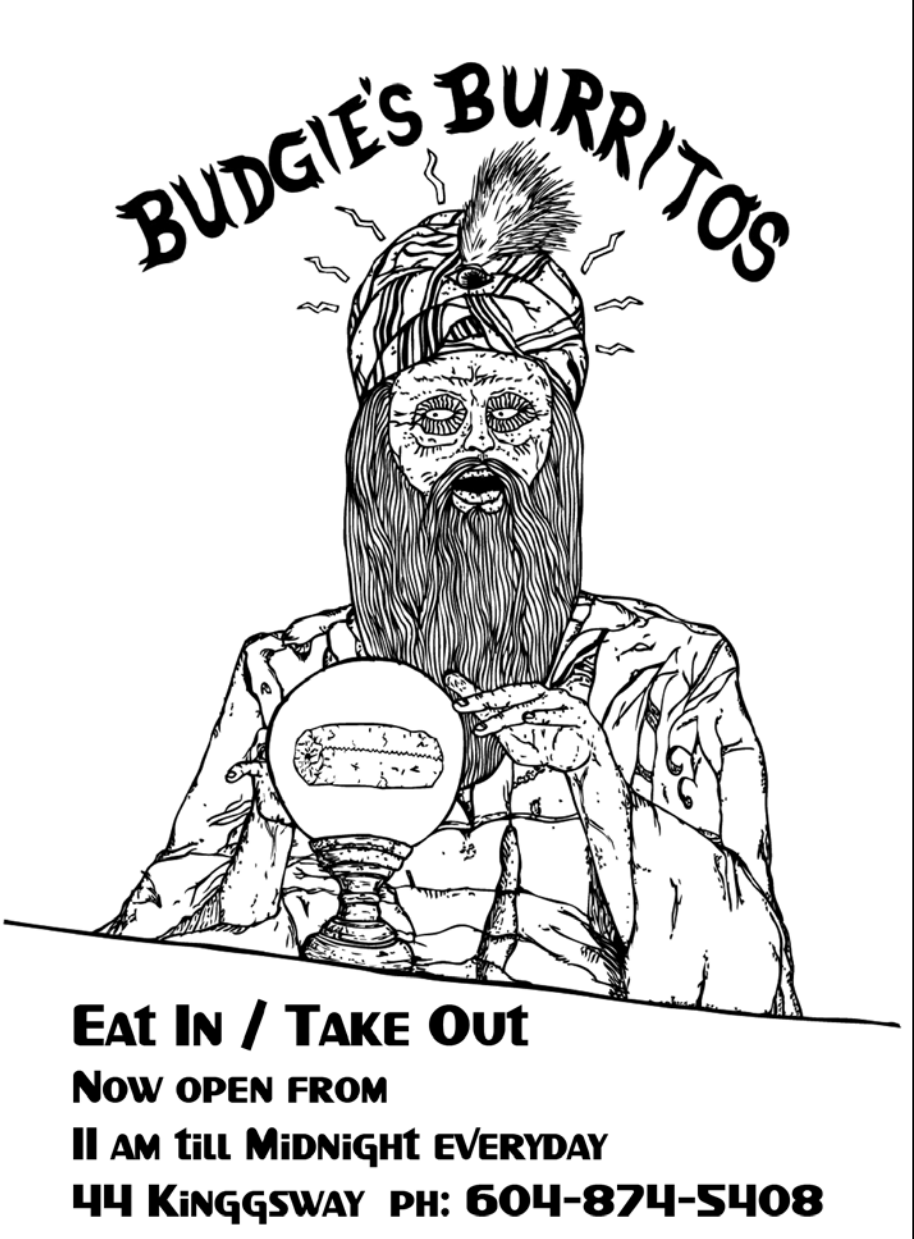
T: I am Knucklehead, T, Tyrone...

AU: Straight out of the trailer park, left Ricky and the boys behind, they never leave...

T: I don't need to make moves with those boys, they do their own thing and I do my own thing, it is what it is, we keep it moving. When I'm in the park we see each other, we hold it down. Love is love.

AU: At least you escaped the trailer park.

T: They make some moves, they move when they can move. Julian's got big plans but he can't do



shit without Ricky, and Ricky can't do shit without him.

AU: And then you and J-Roc are attached at the hip. Hey, what's your name?

Rude Dowg: My name is Rude Dowg, r-u-d-e d-o-w-g, that's what you should look up if you want to see me, I'm rhyming right now, in the place to be, and one to the mother-fuckin' two to the three.

AU: What can you tell me about this man here?

RD: I can tell you that I grew up with him since I was about nine or ten years old, me and him did little kiddy bitty o's when we were young and stuff, and he's the reason why I rap today. This man has been the most consistent in Nova Scotia, he was in a group with Classified back in the day called Ground Squad. After that he still kept the Knucklehead movement going, then came *Trailer Park Boys*, Season One all the way up to Season Ten, you can see him in pretty much every episode, and all three movies as well.

AU: So were you cast in TPB because you were in the local scene?

T: Pretty much, they liked what they saw so they put me in it. I said that in a song. My "Trailer Park" song on my album *Hard Headed*, you can see it on iTunes. I have five albums out, actually.

AU: So you were in the rap game before the show started?

T: I've been doing this shit before the show started, for a long time, since I was a kid, been holding it down. It is what it is, I get respect for that and I get love for that now, too. I get appreciated and I'm getting paid for that now too, so it is what it is. Goes to show that when you stick to your goals and you stick to your dreams, stick to that shit, follow your dreams, that shit can come true, yo. It's fuckin' true.

AU: I'm getting the feeling that J-Roc might be riding on your coattails! What's J-Roc all about?

T: We'll see what it is, he's still my man so we'll see what it is...

AU: Would you do an album together?

T: That could possibly happen, whenever he's ready. He's being a man, dealing with his son.

AU: Yeah he's on the road with his son, what's

his name again?

T: Yeah so I let him do that with his son, McFlurry...

AU: Do you have any words of advice for McFlurry?

T: I got all kinds of advice for McFlurry, but that's not my son. We'll let J-Roc do his thing with him, meanwhile I've got a hold down the Roc Pile and Roc Pile's got a hold down the Park, and that's what the fuck we do. Sunnyvale, Roc Pile, Trailer Park... Hard as fuck. Know what I'm sayin'?

AU: For the people that missed the show tonight, what did they miss?

T: Rhymes, gritty, lyrical, funny, comical, hilarious...

AU: You smoke that BC bud?

T: I smoked that BC bud, it was bomb, it was good... keep bringing it to me, it's all good. You just missed a really good show, with a lot of good performers that bring a lot of raw talent. You should have been here to check it and if you weren't, fuckin' catch it next time, yo. I'll be back.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans of the *Trailer Park Boys*?

T: You fuckin' follow me, yo. Follow me, I'm somebody to see, yo, watch me, yo, on Netflix, on your Android box, I'm on *Trailer Park Boys*, I'm T, I'm Tyrone, they call me Knucklehead, you know what it is. Check out my five albums, I've got videos on YouTube, Knucklehead, take it from there. You can Google fan raps "Protect Ya Neck" with Ghostface Killah from Wu-Tang, you can see me rap with Wu-Tang, I'm up there, I did that shit twice. You can follow me on Instagram, knucklehead_365, follow me, you can see what the fuck I do, you can see how real I keep it, it's all real, no fake, all real, it is what it is, you know what it is.

AU: You are on the exact opposite coast of the *Trailer Park Boys*, the west coast, are you feelin' this shit?

T: I'm feelin' this shit, it's all good, as long as they show love to the Trailer Park and Sunnyvale and Roc Pile, love is love. I appreciate it. I fuckin' told you how to hit me up, so you hit me up.

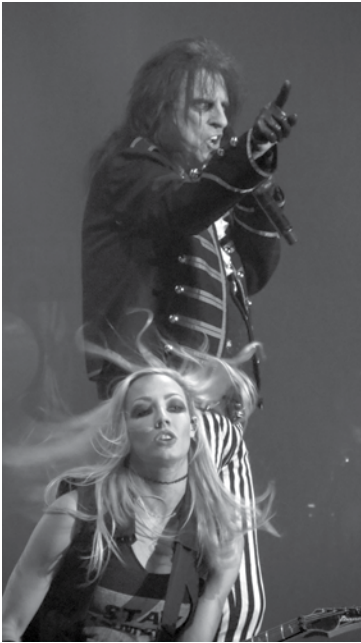
Absolute Live Reviews

Alice Cooper
The Q Centre, Victoria, BC
Oct 18th, 2016

Fans all around North America got to “Spend the Night With Alice Cooper” on a tour that spanned a part of 2016; this shock-rocker is not slowing down. What’s special about this year’s show is that he paid tribute to legends Keith Moon, Lemmy Kilmister and David Bowie. He sang covers of “Pinball Wizard,” “Ace of Spades,” and “Suffragette City,” along with familiar hits like, “No More Mr. Nice Guy,” and “Poison.”

The floor is the best way to see this man perform, and if you’re close to the front, you can also grab a memento, as Alice Dollars rain down from the stage. For the conservative, seats along the bowl make for a comfortable view of the fun shenanigans going on, but it’s not quite the same!

The first leg of the tour went from Aug 6 – 26, which went from Kalamazoo, Michigan to Tuscon, Arizona. The second, from Oct 4 – 30 which started in Toledo, Ohio before winding its way over to British Columbia — with a stop in Victoria, BC on Oct 18th,



where editor-in-chief Ira Hunter and this author were in attendance. As a pre-Halloween show, the stage was decked out with eerie pumpkins, and if I only I had been closer, I’d have looked inside to see if any sugar was hiding there. Instead, they were set decorations for the smoke effects. Cooper rocked the house, and everything we have seen from his previous shows (or viewed online) was experienced in full exuberance.

Lead guitarist Nita Strauss certainly made the night very special! Just witnessing her rocking out only proves why she’s number one in *Guitar World*’s “10 Female Guitar Players You Should Know,” and her smoking presence makes Orianthi (who played with

Cooper from 2011-2014) simply look cute onstage. Both are great musicians, but when it comes to sheer presence, Strauss kicks it up a notch. With her lineage tracing back to composer Johann Strauss, perhaps seeing her play the classics like in the ’86 Ralph Macchio film *Crossroads*, is not too far off.

As long as Cooper continues touring and returns to my hometown, I’ll be back for more, armed with my camera. He’s the king of shock rock for a reason, and I need another helping.

- By Ed Sum

Halloween Horror Nights
Universal Studios
Los Angeles, CA

Well folks, Halloween is over, yes I know, but I felt it important to cover some events I went to while in the US. I remember being disappointed in the recent mazes at Halloween Horror Nights at Universal Studios, and saw there were going to be mazes of sequels of films this year, so I wasn’t sure what to expect, but really enjoyed them. One of them was *Halloween II*, which the outdoor setting looked great for; we see the home where Michael Myers is about to fall after being shot by Dr. Loomis, and inside was a lot more fun, revealing the hospital scene like the nurse being scarred by boiling water in a jacuzzi. I peeked in an area to see if he would appear again, and Michael came out and followed me, which was fun. Someone that worked there told me to wait a sec, and I thought at first someone was going to tell me what I did was against the rules, but that wasn’t the case.

Also, there was the maze of *Texas Chainsaw Massacre 2* in which I was totally tripping out, and saw many Chop Top characters and, of course, Leatherface terrorizing, as well... body parts galore!

One of the best mazes was *The Exorcist*, as this one wasn’t a sequel. Things really made you jump while going in this one; when we entered, we saw the special edition version of possessed Reagan crawling down the stairs, upside down. Plus, we spot her head spinning in another area and spitting out green stuff, which was awesome.

What could be better than the maze of *Freddy Vs Jason*, in which we see some different Jason characters, including one from *Friday the 13th Part VII: The New Blood*, as well as Freddy Krueger. Plus, we spot Mrs. Voorhees wandering around in the maze, since we all remember Krueger pre-tending to be her in the beginning of the movie, in order to awake her son so he can wreak havoc on Elm Street.

There was an improved maze of the *Walking Dead* and I must say that after seeing this, I need to watch the show, as everyone said how awesome it is. Yes folks, I’m behind on stuff. I will see it eventually. I saw a maze of *American Horror Story*, another TV show I haven’t watched yet... seeing how wicked their maze looked, I am stoked to check that one out, as well.

I hope next year they will have some of the same, as it was exciting.

-By Greg Tiderington
www.racksandrators.com

Lone Wolf And Cub
Criterion Collection

In 1970, manga creator Kazou Koike, along with artist Goseki Kojima, unleashed a new brand of comic book storytelling onto the world with *Lone Wolf And Cub*. It was so popular, in fact, that within a year, the first of six feature films would come out in Japan. *Lone Wolf And Cub: Sword Of Vengeance* was adapted to the silver screen by producer Shintaro Katsu (*Zatoichi*), Director Kenji Misumi (*The Tale of Zatoichi*) and starred Tomisaburo Wakayama as Itto Ogami. The first entry of the series was written by its creator, Kazou Koike, and is by far one of the greatest comic book adaptations I have ever seen. This first film sticks so close to its source material that there are actual lines of dialogue and action sequences lifted directly from the manga itself. This gives *Sword Of Vengeance* a very atmospheric tone that, even though at times it can be a little slow, is the perfect intro film into one of the best swordplay series

of films to come out of Japan. Koike went on to write the next four films, and Misumi would end up directing four of the six films, only taking a break from the fourth and sixth. Having Wakayama play the lead, along with Akihiro Tomikawa as Daigoro his infant son in all six films, gives this saga of father and son an incredible flow that blends eye-popping action with lovingly tender moments so effortlessly that you can almost forget that these were all shot over only two short years. The second film in the series, *Baby Cart At The River Styx* is by far the most gruesome and outrageous entry. Misumi, thinking that this might be the last film Toho would allow them to make, used the unique situation to up the action and violence making *River Styx* one of the bloodiest samurai films ever made. This is one of the reasons why Roger Corman used most of the second film

for the re-edited *Shogun Assassin* that came out in America in 1980. *Shogun Assassin* took pieces from *Sword Of Vengeance* and *River Styx*, rewrote the story and dubbed it in English for North American audiences. For most people growing up in the 80s, this was the film that they knew and had no idea that there were at least four others out there. Thanks to The Criterion Collection and a few other distribution companies out there, we can now enjoy the entire series the way it was meant to be seen. The third film, *Baby Cart To Hades* slows the pace down after the gore dripping, balls-to-the-wall sequel it follows. Even though it’s not as extreme as the previous film, it is still an excellent film, and worthy of the name *Baby Cart*! The fourth film, *Baby Cart In Peril* might be my favourite of the bunch. This film has some mind-altering action scenes, tattooed ninja assassins and an engaging revenge storyline that grabs a hold of you and doesn’t let go until the final frame. *Baby Cart In Peril* also introduces a new director to the series, and thus adds a change of tone not seen in the films before it. Buichi Saito is no stranger to Japanese action films, having directed a slew of the “Diamond Guys” movies for Nikkatsu Studios, and takes hold of the reins with zero issues. The next entry, *Baby Cart In The Land Of Demons*, sees the return of director Mis-

umi, but also adds Tsutomu Nakamura to help Koike pen the story. Nakamura would take the place of Koike as writer for the sixth and final film, *White Heaven In Hell*. *White Heaven* would also find its director with horror veteran Yoshiyuki Kuroda who adds a nice bit of fantasy to the last film. Zombie assassins are hunting Itto and Daigoro down until the finale which takes place in the snow covered mountains of Japan. This breathtaking showdown finds our heroes sledding down the slopes while pursued by skiing samurai until its blood-soaked conclusion. The mixture of red and white makes for a very powerful ending to one of the most unique samurai epics of all time. I can see why *Lone Wolf And Cub* had such an impact on the samurai genre and inspired such films as *Kill Bill* and *Ninja Scroll*, to name a few. Plus, RZA from the Wu-Tang Clan would end up using samples from *Shogun Assassin* in the 1995 album *Liquid Swords* from artist GZA / Genius. This set, presented by The Criterion Collection, features the six *Lone Wolf And Cub* films, plus *Shogun Assassin*, all in high definition. It also has a ton of supplements, including a 33-page booklet with a written essay by Patrick Macias, a slipcase with newly commissioned artwork, and a physical Easter egg hidden in the packaging. The price tag might be high, but it’s packed so full of sword-swinging adventure that’s it’s worth every penny.

- Cody No Teeth



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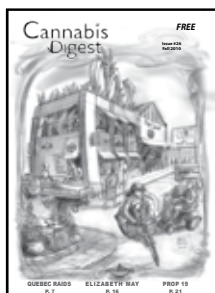
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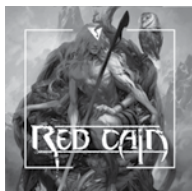
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Absolute Album Reviews

Red Cain - Red Cain Independent



Red Cain's dark vision is channeled with full-on and wildly epic symphonic elements, all sutured with in-

dustrial songwriting aesthetics. Just because it sounds like they enjoy the presence of Marilyn Manson doesn't mean they skimp on the Dream Theater instrumental excess, because the musical prowess isn't to be denied on this release.

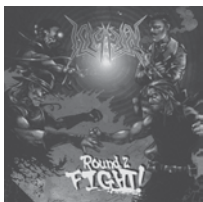
Each song is a chance at an unforgettable anthem, and these guys don't let it go to waste. Huge vocal delivery is central to the success of their sound, but the guitars definitely turn up the heat to assure you that this is a metal show, not an opera. The opening track, "Guillotine," is a perfect mix of pain and ecstasy; it comes off as a cross between A Perfect Circle's early stuff and Symphony X.

Stories are told with intricate detail, like some ancient European folk tale; the meanings may not be reaching out to the personal, but you can easily find appreciation in the true importance emanating from this dynamic collection of music.

-Dan Potter

Illyrian - Round 2: Fight! Independent

What do you do when thrash metal just doesn't do it for



you anymore? Like this band, you add a couple more vocalists, and up the razor-sharp guitar solo blasts. Their recipe for a crazy mutant variant form of thrash-meets-death metal is as refreshing as a lot of Revocation can be. I'd actually rank these dudes as a couple notches more mad. The metallic brew that spews out of the speakers clearly has no respect for any purist ideals or for that matter anyone not afflicted by ADHD.

The song "Round 2: Fight!" is the kind of anthem perfect for underground UFC matches. Brutal, calculated, relentless, and entertaining to the dark side of human nature. The lyrics are all well-written and often read like a horror comic. The track "Zeta Reticulan" is a great example of this highly entertaining alternate reality, and the full-bore guitar riffs with tri-vocal attack also really propel it beyond the underground metal dimensions.

As heavy metal continues to prove itself an elastic genre, I'm glad this band exists and heeds the call to create your very own brand to meet the needs of the daydreaming metal mutants out there.

-Dan Potter

Fractal Cypher - The Human Paradox Independent

The album cover says it all, with a picture depicting long-forgotten chess pieces, worn down by neglect and by the elements of time, abandoned and left to turn to dust. This ominous image is a great primer for the dark world of despair and struggle that is told over a nitro-powered,



Dream Theater-like aesthetic. There is lots of singing, but not just from the vocalist, as each instrumentalist hits that plain of smooth cohesiveness and just sings away.

The thick and consistent mix of power metal-influenced songwriting always leaves room for some Steve Vai-style instrumental madness, whether it's the keyboardist or the guitarist ripping away, it's clear that neither one of them wants to be outshone. Each song is built on that ballad-like feeling, but at the same time emits a mosh pit-stirring chaos. "Prison Planet" tears shit up from the first note, and the warped sci-fi keyboard strokes initiate a blazing guitar solo that really makes this anthem of escape notable.

This is a very solid debut album by these guys, who obviously have the prog within.

-Dan Potter

Endemise - Anathema Independent

Sometimes the darkest night leads to an even darker night. That is the motto of this Ottawa-

stationed unit that specializes in blackened death metal so blackened that a black hole could get sucked into the sounds, never to return. The first track, "Nocturne," is a bowel-loosing mix of retched-up vocal sounds wrapped in crushing guitar blitzkriegs and suffocated by miserable orchestral elements straight out of early Soviet Russia.

The awe-inspiring brutality continues with "Blackening," which spirals out of control pretty fast with its downtrodden guitar lead lines and

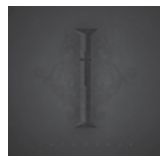


blastbeats from Mordor's castle. Mixing Abigail Williams with some Cattle Decapitation is really for the professionals, and shouldn't be tried at home, but these guys quickly prove they are most worthy.

Mournful horn sections initiate "Come Serene Dark," before a true pummeling ensues - these guys deliver the cluster bombs of metal here; too inhumane even for war.

-Dan Potter

Inire - Cauchemar Independent



These Canadian cowboys from hell bring the grooves and fury on their second full-length. There is quite the depth of influence throughout the thirteen tracks, everything from Disturbed to the Cancer Bats, even tinges of Alice In Chains. The track "Endless" detonates with the blast of Pantera-grade munitions, but with a melodic tunefulness that keeps it memorable.

Lots of thrash keeps things complex so the anthems don't just turn into radio-friendly marketing schemes. A great example of their mutant mixing of hard rock and metal is "Crash," which has a hardcore-like verse structure and shout-along choruses that are reminiscent of southern metal genres, with even some Tool-like sounds climbing to the surface. "Hell is Us" is probably the most representative of their

sound, as it has huge guitar riffs with a chorus that is catchy without compromise; many of the guitar solos throughout this album are excellent, but this track has the six string passion, for sure.

-Dan Potter

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Fleshgod Apocalypse

Interview by Adam VanThiel

FLESHGOD APOCALYPSE

Fleshgod Apocalypse singer and guitarist, Tommaso Riccardi took some time out his unbelievably busy day to sit and have a chat with *Absolute Underground* about his band, their music and their current cross-Canada tour with Epica.

Absolute Underground: Let's get right into it. Has your music ever been influenced by the different regional cultures of Italy?

Tommaso Riccardi: Italy has a lot of variety, because different parts were dominated by different people over the ages and it really shows through, especially in the south. So I think it plays a role.

AU: Can tell me about the themes displayed in your music?

TR: In general I would say that Fleshgod could be considered a concept band, I mean as you have seen, between our image, videos, live shows, etc, they have all been connected in a way until now. Even the name Fleshgod Apocalypse, we considered like the human incarnation of god, meaning that humanity, whether you believe in god or the devil or whatever, it's all still us that decides what we do, and our decision is the only one that matters in the end, the ones who can decide to what they want to do or not are represented in Fleshgod. Then you put the word Apocalypse next to it, putting importance on the fact that we unfortunately, always choose to destroy ourselves. I still feel it's an important message even though it's presented in a bleak and apocalyptic way. Throughout the albums, we have always been talking about humans, in different ways and perspectives.

AU: So what about the new album is it still following the same themes?

TR: Well on *King*, we used this idea of having different characters in a romantic era court, where the king and all the characters are metaphors for the events and things happening around us, because now it looks like society and technology, even the smartphones we are using right this minute, while certainly a positive thing, are enabling people to get lost in a torrent of information, which becomes such an addiction to consume such worthless content, that now everyone is beginning to forget what information is actually important. The

way things are approached in the media and the information that gets selected to be put on display for all to see, it just looks like it's a self-fulfilling

prophecy where we as people fall deeper and deeper into the hole, losing all connection to reality. So the King is someone that actually exists in each of us, still able to remember what he needs to be happy.

If you can still talk to people and relate to them without having to use Facebook, then that means you are still here. But if you get lost in the ocean of distraction, you will end up sick.

AU: Do you feel the new age of social sharing is taking away from music?

TR: I think every generation has its dark moments, we always go through shit, but I think that it's a sort of mechanism or cycle, that we create things and adapt to them and that really the only thing you can do is work on yourself and focus on being more connected personally to people and reality. I think that everything happening in the world right now is going to evolve and go too far, but children born today won't suffer the same ways we do, because they will grow up in it and be used to it, they won't know any differently. A big part of their lives could be lived digitally.

AU: What makes your writing process unique?

TR: I don't know if it's unique. It's very similar to composing classical music from the past. Francesco Paoli, our drummer is our artistic director also, and he is the one that follows the whole process and writes the music with Francesco Ferrini, our pianist. Ferrini works more on the instruments and orchestration, but they still write together, making the song ideas and building the concept. The arrangements are added after. We always do preproduction, we are never ever writing in the rehearsal room. Then the singers adapt the

lyrics to the vocal lines. It is very important to have the vocals laid out properly so that the right word is used in parts that need to convey more power. Then we hit the studio. Sometimes we have to change parts or re-write something if it sounds off in the recording. Usually it's just changing words to fit parts better.

AU: How did you develop your vocal style?

TR: I was a clean singer long before I started doing growls. It was kind of casually brought out when I joined Fleshgod, but I had experience doing more melodic screaming from previous bands and such. I had also been studying opera for about three years to help my clean technique. I think it is also super important to have a good ear, and to learn where the sound is coming from in the body, and really listen to singers you like. I also had help from Francesco, because he has been doing these kind of vocals for a while. He is a very good teacher. The rest is just learning as you go. I feel like now I have my style and it works, but I am a perfectionist, so I try not to think about it too much.

AU: What do you notice about audiences in Europe versus audiences in North America?

TR: In Europe, people are very embroiled in history because we are the "old world," so it takes more to impress people. Like, if you're a new band, you could put out three or four albums before people really freak out. In North America, I have noticed people really throw themselves into everything. In many places there are circle pits, which isn't easy to get in Europe. People like a lot of variety in the music here. There is a ton of music distinction in genres of music, but tours here can have us on a bill with Epica, who still have screaming and some fast songs, but they are night and day different from us. Open-minded people can always find a connection to music that speaks to them regardless of genre. It's really cool that we have such a variety on this tour.

AU: What's next?

TR: Nothing is absolutely concrete while we are on the road, since we are trying to focus more on the show.

Next year, I think that we are still touring, maybe in South America, and we have to go back to some places we haven't toured for our last record, as well. We still have a ton of promo to do and shows to play.

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Diemonds

By Vern Wembly and Gumpo Smith

Toronto's Diemonds, fronted by the fiery Priya Panda, has a reputation as being one of Eastern Canada's scrappiest live bands.

For the uninitiated, the band treads a fine line between sleazy L.A. hair metal, crunchy punk rock, and raunchy millennial heavy metal. As discordant and unlikely as that may seem, the band somehow wraps up all their influences into one helluva live show (if reviews and rumours from the East are to be believed), and some amazing albums, including last year's *Don't Wanna Die*.

Priya Panda sat down at her computer and answered the questions that we demanded answers for:

Absolute Underground: Tell us about the formation of Diemonds and how you decided to get involved.

Priya Panda: I started this band in east Toronto with a group of my closest friends. We started off playing keggers and writing super simple three-chord punk-inspired rock'n roll. The band didn't really take shape and leave the basement until I went to show in New York City - and while I was staying there for an extended period, I met C.C. He was a roadie for Death From Above

1979- and they were on a massive tour. I had been dating a cousin of one the members for a long time. C.C. and I met on a tour bus in front of Madison Square Gardens. I remember being super surprised that he and I had never met before being around the same age group, into the same things (Ratt, shows, beer) and from the same city, which is big, but pretty small when it comes to young hair metal fans.

A year later, I was still struggling with the lineup I had and also DJ-ing. I was working one night at an 80s rock party and C.C. walked in. He asked me what I was up to, and I said I was still doing the band, but it we were looking for a guitar player now. The rest is history both of us have been steering the ship since early on.

AU: What was your reaction when you found out that you were nominated for a Juno award earlier this year?

PP: Holy shit, how did they find out about us? I can't believe it. THIS IS AMAZING!

AU: If somebody said to you that getting nominated for a Juno award makes the band not cool in an underground kinda way, how would you respond?

PP: I would say I don't care. For us, we've basically lived in a van for a decade and played shows for two to 10,000 people. It brings us a lot of excitement to have our music potentially exposed to ten times the number of people that we could by playing shows alone. It's always been

about playing live for us, the more people who dig what we do, that means there's going to be more shows for us to play, and that always breathes life into Diemonds.

AU: Your recent album *Never Wanna Die* sounds a bit more "produced." Was that something you were going for on this album, or did that naturally evolve during the recording sessions?

PP: You're right - it sounds more produced because we actually worked with a producer. Our past releases were basically us and a recording engineer. We love big rock records as well as 7" singles that we got off the merch table at shows in high school, so I think we tried to have the best of both worlds in the first few releases. The last record, *Never Wanna Die*, we really see it as an album that was sort of bridging the gap from the 80s and 70s-inspired rock and metal that initially inspired us, and blending it with a modern rock production and sound. Since it was the first record where we immersed ourselves in the process for a couple of months, we learned so much about what we want our next record to sound like.

AU: When you're on tour, who drives?

PP: The only one who doesn't have a license is DK. In some of our heaviest touring years, myself and Aiden, our drummer, were the only drivers. A few years ago, we played Heavy MTL in Montreal and then had to get to the Whisky in LA for our next gig, and we were on the tightest timeline imaginable, with two drivers. It was nuts, and a borderline impossible feat. I'd drive until I couldn't see, and then Aiden would be forced to wake up and switch out. We did that back and forth for days. I remember being super nauseous as I was doing my make-up in the back on the van when we pulled up to the sold-out show we were about to play at the Whisky, literally minutes after not stopping moving for so many hours.

AU: What is the weirdest thing that has ever happened to the band on tour?

PP: This is one of the usual ones where I can't really tell the juiciest ones because I'm not Nikki Sixx, but I'll go with the time our transmission exploded so violently that pieces of it shot out of the hood of van before catching on fire on the border of Iowa and Illinois. We had just finished a show in Chicago and wanted to make some headway overnight on our drive... Our bass player at the time, Tommy, was driving when everything started shooting out of the hood of the car and out onto our windshield and the road. We all had to wait on the side of the road for three hours for help and it was freezing, being the late fall. By chance, an Iowa state trooper cruised by and noticed us. I remember my first thought was, "Oh my god, I have weed on me and have to sit in the back of a cop car." I held a five-hour old deep dish

pizza on my lap the entire time to cover the smell of it as he took all of our IDs and drove us back to Illinois. We ended up spending six whole days in Rock Falls, IL, as the only mechanic in town sourced the parts from the closest major city, which was Chicago, nearly three hours away... being cooped up in that small hotel for days not knowing when we'd be able to leave missing more and more shows, still gives me the shivers.

AU: How did you end up working with producer Eric Ratz (Billy Talent, Arkells, Monster Truck) on the last album?

PP: We knew Eric because he mixed our last record, *The Bad Pack*. We were introduced to him through our one-time drummer and eventual guitar player, Alan Riches, who passed away a few years ago; that hit us extremely hard. Working with Eric and people we knew through Alan was a tribute to him and our friendship with him. Eric was kicking ass and making some really cool records and he was at the top of our list. We were thrilled when he had some time in his schedule for us. He is definitely the type of guy who's always working.

AU: Are you in the planning/writing stage for your next album? How do you feel the next album will be a progression from the last?

PP: Yes 100% working on new tunes, and recording new demos and hashing them out down in our basement. It's an exciting time for us. The songs are a lot less of us wearing our influences on our sleeves and rather finally creating our own unique Diemonds sound.

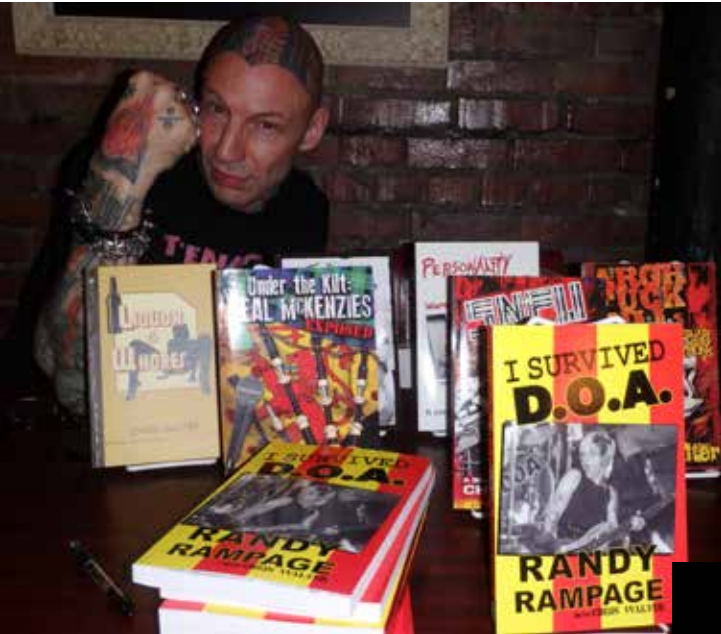
AU: Last year the band toured in Japan - what was that experience like. Did you play with any Japanese bands you'd recommend? Any wacky experiences?

PP: It was the best, it was band-bucket list-worthy. Every band dreams of going to Japan, and with good reason. The fans are incredible. They bring new meaning to the word *die-hards*. They love the music, and they showed up in droves. It is amazing to be signed to an underground label in Japan and getting to see that side of things. Solitude was a band that we really loved.

Diemonds are on tour across Canada this December with Pigeon Park. They play Victoria on Dec. 18th (Upstairs), Nanaimo on Dec. 17th (The Cambie), Vancouver on Dec. 16th (The Roxy), Kelowna on Dec. 15th (Fernandos), Edmonton on Dec. 14th (Brixx), Calgary on Dec. 13th (The Gateway).

diemonds.net/
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PHOTO CREDIT: Diemonds



Chris Walter

Interview by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are you and what are you most (in)famous for?

Chris Walter: I sing “Dancing With Myself” loudly and out-of-key in the shower and make a damn fine lasagna. I also wrote a bunch of books about punks, drunks, junkies, and whores.

AU: When did you first decide you wanted to be a writer?

CW: That happened after I’d already failed at everything else in life. How hard could it be to make up a bunch of shit and write it down? I thought it would be easy.

AU: Has punk rock influenced every path you have taken in life?

CW: That would be a safe assumption, except that time I bought matching towels with my family at Supertore. That wasn’t very punk rock.

AU: Some of your early works were autobiographical and based on your true life experiences, was that good therapy?

CW: Who needs therapy? I just worked on those books whenever I ran out of drug money, which was fairly often, sadly. I eventually quit hard drugs because they’re so fucking expensive. And they kill you and stuff.

AU: You’ve written several biographies

book, and maybe some bands played. I’m not really sure.

AU: What was the funniest Randy Rampage story you can remember?

CW: Christ in hell, way too many to choose from. Buy the fucking book and see for yourself.

AU: How many books have you written to date?

CW: I dunno, twenty-five? Twenty-eight? Depends on whether or not you count the ones that were too shitty for a proper release.

AU: What are some of your favourites?

CW: They all suck shitballs, but the SNFU and Dayglo biographies sell well. So do *East Van*, *I Was a Punk Before You Were a Punk*, *Liquor & Whores*, and *Boozecan*. I don’t know why people buy them, but I’m glad they do. I’m a bit too old for drywall now.

AU: Take us through a regular writing day. Do you have a minimum amount of words you must write every day?

CW: I drink coffee, surf porno, spam my friends on Facebook, take naps, and wait for my girl to get home from work to make me dinner. I pound out a few words here and there if I’m in the right mood. Guys like me should be shovelling coal in China, but I got lucky.

AU: What are you currently working on, and what are some upcoming projects fermenting in your brain?

CW: Oh, shit. Somehow I never lack for a shortage of bad ideas. From a half-baked novel about

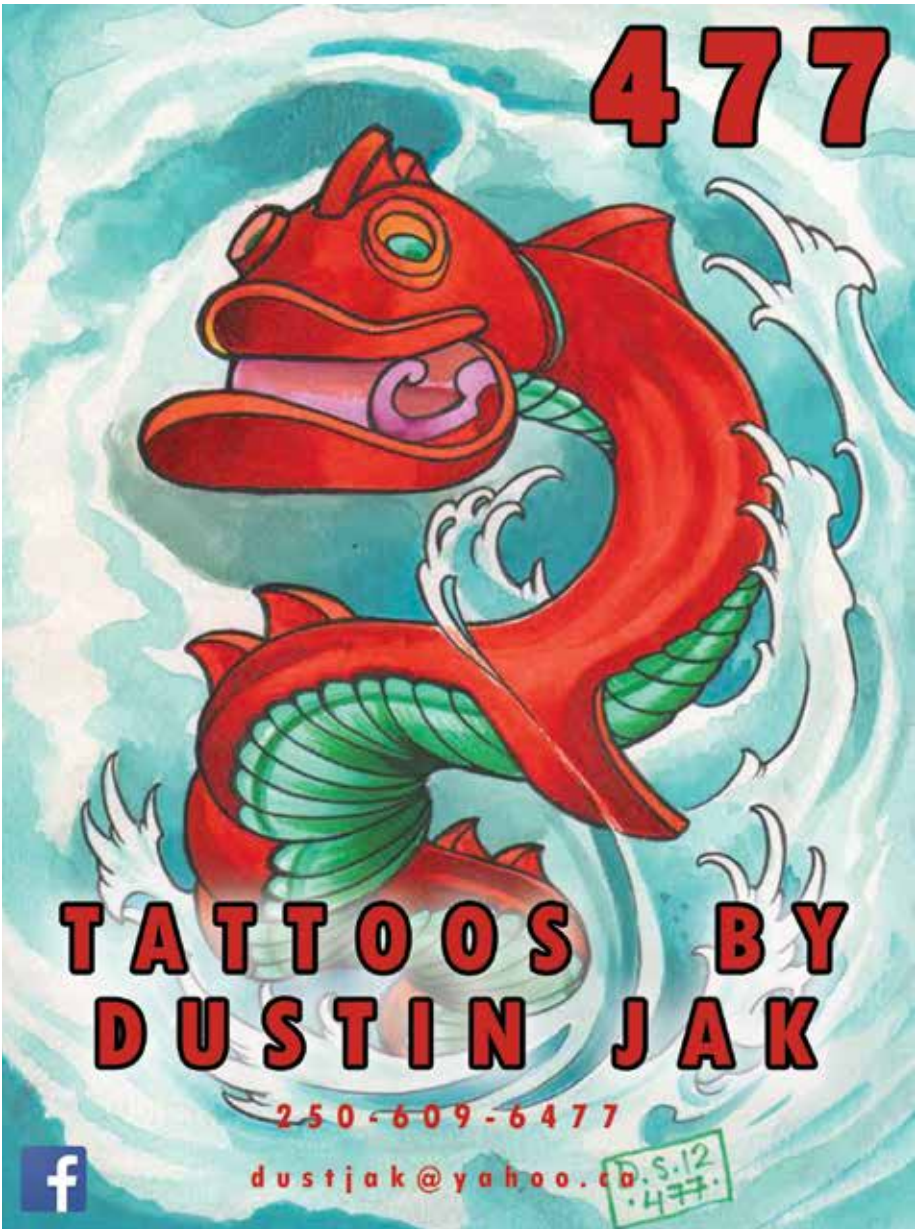
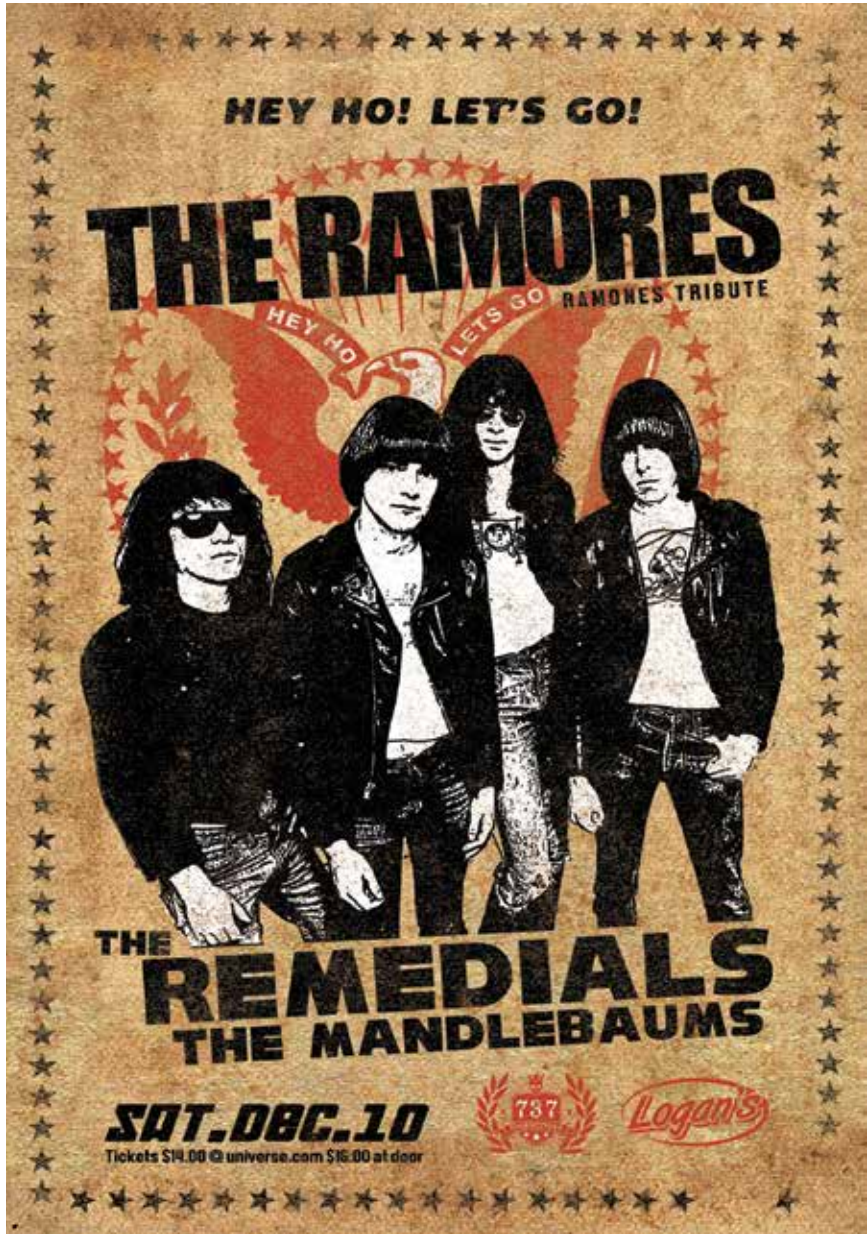
rock stars who sideline as professional burglars, to another book set at a Winnipeg pool hall in the ’70s, the stories ooze forth like sewage from a ruptured septic tank. I’m currently working on a non-fiction book, *Tales From the Tattoo Shop*, which is a bunch of wild stories collected from tattoo artists around the world (But mostly North America, because I’m lazy.)

on Canadian punk bands. Who have you documented so far?

CW: Personality Crisis, Dayglo Abortions, SNFU, and Real McKenzies. I recently helped Randy Rampage with his memoir, *I Survived D.O.A.* Again, I had fuck all else to do.

AU: Tell us about your latest release party to promote the book you and Randy Rampage wrote.

CW: Randy and I gathered with a bunch of other drunken degenerates at a bar on the Downtown Eastside and consumed alcoholic beverages until early in the morning. I think Randy read from his





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Randy Rampage

Interview by Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to and what are best know for?

Randy Rampage: I'm Randy Rampage, and probably for just being unpredictable and doing whatever.

AU: Where are we today, is this a special occasion?

RR: Yeah we're at Pat's Pub, my book's coming out and we're going to play a show, hopefully everybody will have a fuckin' good time.

AU: So we're here for the book launch for / Survived D.O.A., written by Chris Walter. Is it all your stories?

RR: Yeah, basically I tried to do it myself and I just had trouble putting it together in a cohesive unit, so I dictated everything to Chris and he put it into a package, and it worked out much better than when I did it, that's for sure.

AU: I know it's hard to do a brief history of all

the bands you've been in, but fill people in.

RR: I started with D.O.A. in '78, and before that I'd been playing in a band, believe it or not, with Bryan Adams, and he went to Sweeney Todd, and I joined D.O.A...

AU: What was that band called?

RR: We weren't even really a named band, we were just jamming and trying to put a band together, I went to high school with the guy, and then both of us were out of school and we went our separate ways, he went to a corporate rock type thing and I went to fuckin' punk rock. I actually run into him about every ten years, in weird places, I always know when he's around because he's the only person there that

knows my real last name. Then I got in with D.O.A. through some punk rockers, I really got into the punk rock scene, and I did D.O.A., two albums with them, a whole pile of singles and whatnot.

AU: With the original lineup.

RR: Yeah, with the original lineup. Then I was out of there for a while, I did Ground Zero, myself and Brad Kent, who was also an original member of D.O.A., we did a band called Ground Zero for a quite a while, no albums out unfortunately, I missed that because he's dead now and we'll never get a chance to release those recordings. Then on and on and on through other bands, Iron Gypsy, this, that and the other thing, Fake It Big Time, again with Brad and a couple other people, a band called Annihilator, which I did a couple metal albums with, which was great.

AU: You were the vocalist for the album Alice in Hell. Amazing album.

RR: That was a fucking roar, man, rocking over to Europe with a fuckin' gold album under your belt, before we'd even fuckin' been there... it was great. It was really cool.

AU: You're known as a bass player but you did vocals on that album...

RR: Yeah, I did the singing, and that's when I got into just singing. I still play bass, and I came back to D.O.A. a couple times after that, Joe and I have worked together on occasion for another three albums after that, and yeah, I'm in and out of D.O.A. all the time. It's quite possible I will be again, I don't know.

AU: This new project is called Rampage...

RR: Yeah it's just a solo project, I've got some really cool guys with me, it's all guys from other bands, Duane Chaos, plays with I, BrainEater, plays with Ace Coden, my bass player Brent is from the Real McKenzies, the Great Balidini from D.O.A. and Powerclown on drums and Joe Turner from Thor. So yeah, it's a good band, super tight, it's great to play together, we enjoy ourselves.

AU: And you just do vocals?

RR: Just vocals, all vocals, that's it. I'm gettin' lazy man, I'm old.

AU: Were there any stories that didn't make it in the book?

RR: There were things that got edited, that will be in the next edition, shall we say, which is just going to be straight tour tales and party tales. It's going to be called *No One is Innocent*, and I shall tell all about the people that I've met and partied with and had fun with. And why not? Somebody's got to do it.

AU: Was it hard to remember all the stuff because you were partying a lot back then, or was it all pretty concise still?

RR: Yeah, I don't know if I'm blessed or it's kind of a nightmare, I've got like an eidetic memory, a photographic memory, I've got super recall of everything, so yeah I remember everything. It's kind of a nightmare because your head gets cluttered with all this shit and you want to get rid of it and you can't. It's like fuck, now I've got some of it out in the book and whatnot. It is what it is, you know. I hope people enjoy it...

AU: Do you think you would sing again for Annihilator, for like a reunion or something?

RR: Yeah definitely, I loved working with Jeff, it's just he's a fuckin' asshole. That's all I can say.

AU: People come and go out of that band a lot?

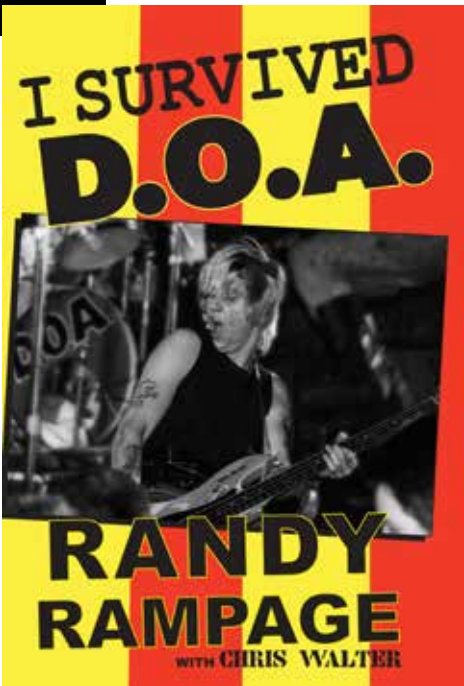
RR: He's got a revolving door policy right? That's his thing. Even though all the album that we sold, everything that we sold out of there, I've never been paid a dime from that band, not a fucking penny. But yeah I'd go back and play with Jeff again, sure, of course. He's a great musician, he's a fantastic guitar player, he's an idiot savant, you know, but an idiot first.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans of punk rock that are still rockin'?

RR: Keep coming out to shows! There are lots of bands out there, lots of new bands coming out, lots of good stuff coming up, young bands and shit. If I'm in town, make sure you come to the show!

AU: Rampage!

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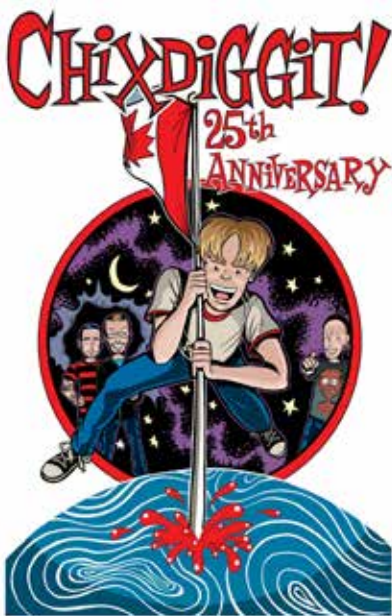


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Murderous clowns can have hard days too, you know? After hours of luring kids in to the woods, a girl just needs to unwind and go out on the town. But what made her put on the clown face in the first place? Sometimes what lies beneath is more terrifying than what first meets the eye...but hey, demons just want to have fun!

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ChixdiggIt

Interview with vocalist KJ Jansen
By Ira Hunter

Absolute Underground: Who are we talking to today?

KJ: I'm KJ from the band ChixdiggIt.

AU: This is your fourth attempt to make it to Victoria, and you finally did it!

KJ: Was it four? There were two others that I knew of that we missed.

AU: And then you missed Rifflandia...

KJ: I think it's just two that we've missed, my daughter got sick and ended up in the hospital...

AU: That's no good.

KJ: That was bad. So that was a rough one, and then we tried to reschedule that and they said, "Oh we've got Rifflandia coming up," and then I fucked up on that one with ferries and stuff, because we were coming up from Seattle.

AU: Everyone else on the tour made it but you guys didn't make it, you went the wrong way!

KJ: Yeah they went a different way than we did, so yeah

that's what happened. But it is only two, it seems like four maybe, but it is only two.

AU: We forgive you.

KJ: I even sang about it on our new record, how I'm sorry for not making it here. If you get the new record, the last part of it is our Ode to Victoria.

AU: So now you've actually made it to Victoria.

KJ: Yeah we couldn't miss this one, though it is funny that the storm of the century is happening right now, it just was one day too late to stop us this time.

AU: I was actually nervous today because a friend said they were stuck on the other side of the ferry and I was like, oh no! They might not make it again.

KJ: We have a few friends coming out that said they might not make it...

AU: This is your 25th Anniversary tour, give us a brief history of the band.

KJ: We started out as four friends making T-shirts, we just wanted to pretend to be in a band, we didn't actually want to do all the music stuff. And then we sold enough T-shirts that people were kind of demanding to hear the band, so we thought why don't we take the joke a little bit further, not too much further, do one show and then quit, and then we ended up getting a couple more shows after that, and eventually we put out a record on Lance Rock Records from Nanaimo.

AU: Best Hung Carrot in the Fridge!

KJ: That's right, then we just started touring and got signed to a label from Seattle, and then we got signed to Fat Wreck Chords.

AU: So the name is all you had at the beginning? Were you just thinking, "Why are we doing this? Because chicks dig it?"

KJ: It was was more to poke fun at other guys in bands... in our school there was lots of guys in bands, they weren't terrible, but they just thought they were pretty great, and then we thought we were great too, but in a different way. So yeah all our energy kind of went into nothing at first, and then we thought let's just do it and try it, and yeah here we are, 25 years later.

AU: What were the early influences on your sound?

KJ: Yeah, there were bands we agreed on and The Ramones were one of them, yeah basically everybody just brought along whatever their big sisters had in their record collections, kind of thing, so yeah like Boomtown Rats and stuff that was on the radio, pop and stuff. Because there weren't any bands around at the time that were poppy and had energy. About a year and a half after we started, Green Day came through and we were like, "Yeah! That's it!" And they played here on that same tour, there weren't very many people at the Calgary show, and

then of course BUM from Victoria, that's another band we discovered that we could agree on.

AU: What kind of special things do you have planned for this 25th anniversary tour?

KJ: There are some songs we're rediscovering, there are some songs we've never played that we're trying. It's all-request, anything anybody wants to hear, we'll try it.

AU: I like the song "Chupacabra"? Do you have any other songs about monsters?

KJ: No, we just did that one because we were touring a lot with the Groovy Ghoulies back then, and they had a Chupacabra song at the same time we had one, and we discovered the Chupacabra together at the same time on tour. So the secret is, we both came up with a Chupacabra song at the same time.

AU: You have a song called "Getting Air," and it's about snowboarding... do you still snowboard or skateboard or anything?

KJ: I haven't in a long time, but our daughter just turned seven and she's starting to ski, so I will snowboard alongside her this season.

AU: There's not many punk songs about snowboarding, I like that song, I'm gonna yell it out tonight.

KJ: We know that one, I think. Good point, I can't think of any other snowboarding songs.

AU: Tell us about your new album.

KJ: So one of our original guys, Mark O'Flaherty, was leaving the band, after the year 2012 and we had just done a bunch of touring that year, so we wrote a song for him. It's a tour diary of our entire year, 2012, so every town we played gets a song, all within one song. So it's a one-song, 25 minutes, 23 songs-in-one...

AU: With an apology to Victoria at the end.

KJ: Yeah, I don't want to give away the ending, but yeah, that's the ending.

AU: What are some things you remember about playing Victoria the times you did make it?

KJ: I remember Harpo's, and I remember we played that curling club one time... hanging out with the guys from BUM, who we were fans of, before we met them. I was reminding Rob Nesbitt of when we played with them the first time in Calgary and we actually got to meet BUM, I was kind of a brash young teen and I told them, "We're gonna be friends," and they just looked at me like, "Who the fuck is this kid?" I told Rob today, 22 years later now, "In your face! We're friends now!" Hanging out with those guys, we always had fun here. Victoria was the first place where we were number one, the Victoria university station, CFUV, we were the number one band for a month here. So that happened early on and was an

encouraging thing, like hey maybe we should keep doing this.

AU: How about Calgary, are you still involved in that scene?

KJ: I don't personally get out as much as I should but make up for it, when we're on tour, I talk about Calgary all the time and how great it is, the bands that I do get to see from there, they're great, I'm totally encouraged by what's going on. It's positive, people are trying stuff, lots of great young bands, and I think what's great about music in Canada is that it's all about word-of-mouth now.

AU: Did Tom Bagley do your new album cover? Tell us about him.

KJ: He's in a great band called Forbidden Dimension, and he's a really unique artist, he's got his own style. He's a really great songwriter, great guitar player, he's this not-mentioned enough treasure that Calgary has.

AU: Are you excited that hockey season has started?

KJ: Yeah it's funny we have a couple Calgary fans in the band, and a couple Edmonton Oilers fans in the band, and the battle of Alberta is actually a thing again.

AU: Being on Fat Wreck Chords, how's that?

KJ: They are the best punk label in the world, it's not meant as offence to anyone else, it's just how hard they work, they're a smart label with smart people working there, Mike and Erin, they know what's going on.

AU: There was just a documentary about the record label too, were you a part of that?

KJ: No we didn't get interviewed for that, but like I said, they were smart.

AU: Final words for Canadian fans?

KJ: Thanks for everything! We're lucky we still get to do this, 25 years later. I don't want to sound like I'm accepting a Grammy or anything but really, thank you very much.

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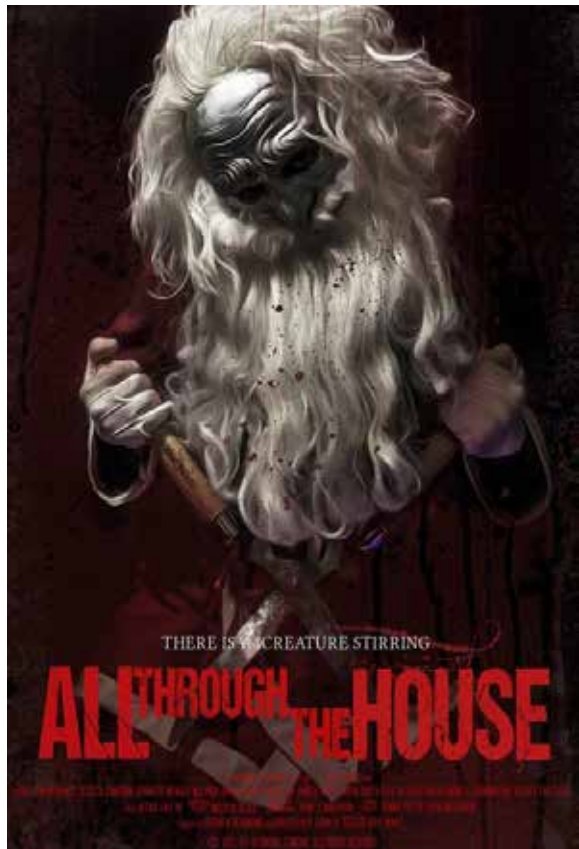
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Absolute Horror

Absolute Xmas Horror

By Vince D'Amato



This may start sounding like a cliché, but I seriously cannot believe that it's Christmas Horror Movie time again! Luckily, I happen to have come across a new Christmas horror film by an insanely talented up-and-comer to the independent horror scene: writer/director Todd Nunes, with his freshman film, *All Through the House*, which has just received its domestic Blu-ray distribution this October. Nunes' film stars his sister, Ashley Mary Nunes, who looks to be a serious frontrunner for the new indie scream queen, and together in *All Through the House*, this brother-sister team hits all the right bells. The film starts off with a beautifully exploitative first kill/shower scene, featuring current indie scream queen Jessica Cameron (in her "Drew Barrymore *Scream*-style, first-starlet-to-die role), and from there, things just get even more awesome. Even within his budgetary confines, director Nunes creates one of the most entertaining, engaging, and even charming Christmas slasher films I've ever seen, and I sincerely mean that – I think *All Through the House* is now my new Christmas horror go-to.

On the surface, the movie gleefully hammers all the right notes for an archetypal slasher film: the Agatha

Christie-style *And Then There Were None* plot, with the seemingly insane and overbearing Stephen King-ish matriarch figure, and the killer with the warped backstory that compels him to commit murders in weirdly fetishistic and creative ways. That's pretty much it, you could literally slip this basic breakdown into *Silent Night*, *Deadly Night*, *Christmas Evil*, or *Black Christmas*, the latter a seminal Canadian classic horror, too – but what makes Nunes' entry into the Christmas-horror/slasher canon so appealing is that not only does



he hit all these notes, he hits them with forte and an earnest joy for the genre, which comes through in the film in consistently charming ways. It's the type of slasher film that, when screened with an audience, the audience cheers along with it. I won't spoil anything by talking about exactly *what* the audience would be cheering with, or what makes *All Through the House*'s series of kills so humourously "creative," but a certain amount of kudos must also go to the film's producer, Stephen Readmond, who clearly trusted Nunes enough to let him run wild, creatively speaking. Nunes said during the Q&A at the PDXtreme Film Festival last December: "I wanted every shot to look like Christmas just threw up everywhere."

Mission accomplished.

Although Nunes' *All Through the House* may have taken my horror-heart when it comes to Christmas slashers, there's still a big spot left there for a special horror anthology featuring the original horror film use of the famous line from the "Twas the Night Before Christmas" poem – 1972's Amicus production of the original *Tales from the Crypt* movie. The stellar first story in this anthology ...*And All Through the House* featured a young and attractive Joan Collins as a murderous wife who finds herself in quite the pickle when she and her young daughter are trapped inside the house with her dead husband (so she can't call the police), and a Santa-suit-wearing, axe-wielding madman appears at her doorstep.

This segment, one of the best of any of the produced stories from EC comics' *Tales From the Crypt*, was also remade twenty years later and directed by Robert "Back to the Future" Zemeckis, in a slightly gorier, but no less effective version for the HBO 1990s series. The original 1972 version was helmed by British horror director and expert cinematographer Freddie Francis (who, years later would shoot Martin Scorsese's nerve-jangling *Cape Fear* remake), and that first segment ...*And All Through the House* easily hijacks the rest of the film, just as Zemeckis' slightly re-imagined version is easily the most outstanding of HBO's first *Tales from the Crypt* season.

Todd Nunes' feature-length horror tale could have easily stayed on a pedestrian path walked by the nearly countless slashers that have come before it, but instead it's permeated by a wicked sense of humour and wit shared by all involved, not least the bright cast who fill their roles with high energy and a devilish sense of fun, whether

it's one of the leading roles, the "Final Girl," the Masked Killer, or simply one of those minor characters who are there for slasher-fodder or chidingly exploitative elements (boobs and blood). These are

not only required elements for any successful blood-and-guts slasher film, but are almost there alongside an ironic sense of humour in Nunes' vision.

Actress Ashley Mary Nunes also shines out as one of the girlfriends who find themselves trapped inside the titular house with the Christmas killer, and it's another tribute to Nunes that he can take what is essentially a chamber slasher and make the whole thing funny and exciting. Most of *All Through the House* obviously has to take place in

the house, and it's not just the insane bloody shenanigans that take place within it that hold our attention, the intentionally gaudy and nearly overwhelming Christmas set dec is something to behold unto itself. wouldn't be surprised to find out that the producers allowed Nunes to spend his budget on fourteen hijacked Wal-Mart trucks destined

for their Christmas aisles. It's this sort of gleefully over-the-top style and sense of humour that pushes Nunes' film into *auteur* territory – not only is it now my favourite Christmas horror movie, it is seriously (but not too seriously) one of the best *slasher* movies I've had the good fortune of coming across. Nunes is a fantastic talent to keep an eye on in the horror genre, and as the *All Through the House* Blu-ray has been released domestically this fall (and internationally at the time of this writing), his producer Stephen Readmond's company has moved ahead in creative and practical support for Nunes' follow-up horror feature, *Death Ward 13*, which will begin production soon and will also star Ashley Mary Nunes. According to the *Death Ward 13* Facebook page, the film is a loose remake of the 1973 cult film *Don't Look in the Basement*, which in turn is sort of a take on Edgar Allen Poe's "The System of Dr. Tarr and Prof. Fether," wherein the violent inmates have taken over the insane asylum. This is obviously right up director Nunes' alley, he seems to hold a fundamental understanding of the tropes of the modern American horror cult film and its audience.

"I am so excited about *Death Ward 13*!" says Nunes, "...I often found myself fantasizing about remaking [*Don't Look in the Basement*] and I was



very excited when... the opportunity to remake [it] presented itself to me.... There are some differences – the mental hospital will be the home of criminally insane psychopaths. There will be more nurses, more maniacs, as well as characters that will be remembered from the original movie; there will be more action and more gore.... Currently, we are in pre-production and, once we



have our casting in place, we are going to pick up steam after the holidays. You can expect to get some big updates after the first of the year." Keep up to date with *All Through the House* and *Death Ward 13* via their respective Facebook pages:

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Absolute Comic-Geekdom

Fan Expo Vancouver 2016 Retrospective

By Ed Sum



appeared at this show.

According to Dan Parent (cover artist for *Archie*) he's here for the people of Vancouver, and said, "I've done this show before. It's a busy and fun show. That's why I'm back."

Even the multi-talented guru of the pop culture scene, Kevin Smith, talked about how he has made this city his home. In "An Evening with Kevin Smith" on Saturday night, he talked about his early life, his time with dad and his early days in this city, when he moved here to learn how to be a filmmaker. He recalled his past as a

freshman and he talked about the best of times and worst of times. He also entertained the crowd by talking about how he managed to get his bud, Jason Mewes, into most of his projects. By the end, Smith had inspiring words for everyone to hear — never give up on your dreams!

Fan Expo Vancouver is not just about these big names. Comic books and the artist alley shared an equal amount of space along with the retailers and exhibitors. The highlight was with Warner Brothers Interactive Entertainment demoing *Batman: Arkham VR* and *LEGO Dimensions*. *Star Wars: Rogue One* was hard not to miss, with the recruitment booth to get a photo op at,



and Yogibo (all nerds need comfy support to rest their weary bodies) was situated nearly at perfect center of the convention space for those needing a moment to rest.

But that did not stop this weary reporter from checking out the independent creators and coming back to chat. Andrew Burke is the founder / writer of *Zombie Robot Comics*, and their flagship title is *Ultraterrestrial*. The story is set in the Pacific Northwest, on Olympic Island, where aliens have come to this planet through portals to terrorize a small town. With only a sheriff and deputy available to deal with this invasion, trying

to repel them is tough. This creator says his influence comes from the all that old sci-fi, *X-Files* kind of stuff (aliens, UFOs and Bigfoot) he loved from the 80s and 90s.

"I decided to do comics revolving around those unsolved mysteries," said Burke.

His company's newest title is *Starfighter*, which focuses more on space exploration and includes something from the Roswell legend to

make "it" work.

Another operation is Arcana Studios, a company that produces more than just comics. With TV programs like *Kagagi: The Raven* now available online at APTN to view, and feature-length films, especially *Howard Lovecraft & the Frozen Kingdom* being distributed by Shout! Factory, their future is bright. The original book was recently reprinted and the compilation, *Three Kingdoms*, is still in print despite what some comic book retailers (using selective distributors) are

saying. As for why Howie is getting lots of love, Michelle O'Reilly, co-owner of Arcana, says both she and her husband, Sean, wanted to give this production house a bit of rebrand, to focus more on kid-friendly content.

"Everyone loves H.P. Lovecraft, but he's not very kid-friendly, so we made our own version that's suitable for younger audiences," revealed O'Reilly.

While some attendees may complain about the odd problem with Fan Expo Vancouver (the anime component felt a world apart), they are trivial when compared to larger events that face logistical problems to keep lines moving with their vast lineup of stars. Brian Stelfreeze (*Black Panther*) is a very popular and respected artist; waiting to chat with him was not all that long



during the times I passed by his booth. He's been to many conventions all over the world and says FEV is a really cool event to be at. Like many other artists, interacting with the fans is what is appealing; he finds it's the fans that make the show truly successful. "I see the way it all comes together is absolutely incredible. That's one of the things I really enjoy about attending," said Stelfreeze.

fanexpovancouver.com

PHOTO CREDIT: Ed Sum



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Masai is at New Westminster Animal Shelter, New Westminster.
shelter@newwestcity.ca

Corn Snakes • Both approx. 2 years: Fennel is great to handle and very friendly. Pepper is quite nice to handle and will get better. Pepper is in shed in this photo.



FENNEL



PEPPER

Fennel and Pepper are at Reptile Rescue, Adoption and Education Society, Richmond
rescued.reptiles@gmail.com

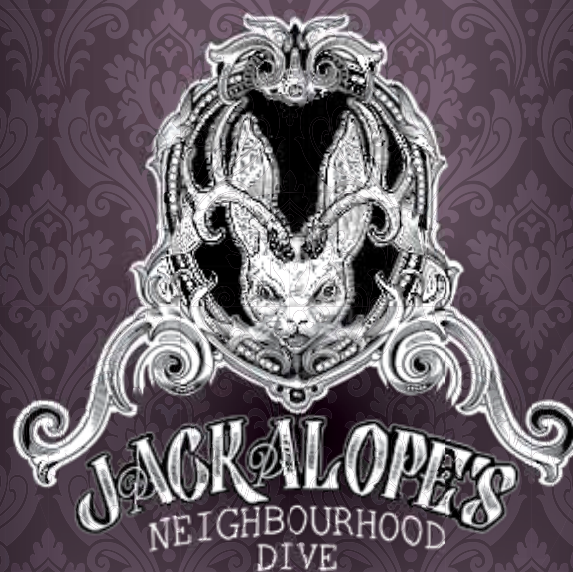


COCO

Pit Bull Terrier • Young • Female • Spayed: Coco is friendly and energetic. She is working hard on her leashing training and dog reactivity. She lives for fetch!! Coco has some anxiety and needs help building confidence. No cats as she has a high prey drive, and older children are better suited for her size and energy.

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SHRED SESSION



Andy Anderson

Interview Andy Anderson by Malcolm Hassin & Jeff Cole

Absolute Underground: How old are you?

Andy Anderson: 20

AU: When did you start skating?

AA: When I was four.

AU: What's your opinion of skateboarding in its current corporate state?

AA: The corporations are dying. What's happening right now in skateboarding is all these crazy small little companies are just blowing up outta nowhere. So what do I think about skateboarding? I think it's really cool, a really good time for creativity, and I feel like high impact is outta the realm of cool these days. It used to be, who could 5-0 this rail or that rail, but now it's who can kickflip front board kickflip any hand rail. I think it's good that it's out of the hands of the corporations. I feel like there's less pressure on amateur skaters to kill themselves for their video to get popular.

AU: Who's your favourite person to skate with?

AA: Probably Sebastian Lopez or Damien Kerr, they're on the same level with the way that they think about skateboarding. It is so awesome, I remember Damien trying to teach me 5-0s on round rails at Chuck Bailey, but then chillin' with Sebastian is just awesome. Sometimes we don't even talk for like four hours, but we still had the best day. He showed me Vancouver and what a front foot impossible is.

AU: What do you think about the skate scene in Vancouver?

AA: I think it's an awesome scene. It's changed so much even in the past few years. It's changing in a good way! I feel like it's a lot more friendly. Like way back in New Spot days, I'd just hear horror stories people harsh vibing each other out. Even two years ago, the crowd at the Plaza, people would say, "Oh no, I don't skate Plaza." There were weird vibes there, aka "plazatude." I feel like it's mellowed out a bit.

AU: What's the gnarliest spot you have skated?

AA: This vert ramp when I was over in India. This thing was made not with plywood but roofing material. Wood is super expensive over there. All their 2x4s are 1x3s. It was all wood from banana trees, so it was all super flexy. It was the first ramp any of the locals had ever built, and it went up in less than a month. The 1x3s were so far apart! It was the second vert ramp in India, inspired by one built for a Tony Hawk demo. Half of it was not finished yet, and it didn't have coping or a deck. It just kind of went up and then the deck was a half inch thick, with 13-foot holes all over, with the exception of some loose plywood laying on top. It was fucked up! All the kids would be in their bare feet. They would just jack somebody's board if he was having a smoke. It was awesome to see a ramp built that was so big, nobody who build it could drop in it. I sure hope it survived monsoon season.

AU: Who do you ride for?

AA: I skate for Skull Skates, Powell Peralta, DC Shoes, Skate One Corp, Mini Logo Trucks. I skate for the bank of Mom and Dad, and am going to skate for the

Smilin' Buddha one day!

AU: Inspirations?

AA: Kevin Harris is a huge inspiration in all genres of skating, along with obviously Gonz, Simon Woodstock, Todd Falcon. Just those weird guys, Matt Hensley, Chad Vaught... I didn't even know he was an inspiration until I discovered him, which was later, but he's doing tricks that I always wanted to do.

AU: We heard you are a top-ranked freestyle skateboarder, is that true?

AA: I am the number one amateur freestyle skater in the world, two years in a row. Most freestylers focus on stationary tricks, and I do a lot of manuals. I just stand out because I do manuals.

AU: Why do you refuse to not, not wear a helmet?

AA: I've been wearing it so long, I always got hassled as a kid, "Dude, what are you going to do when you're 18...?" Like, when I am going to take it off? It has just never really come off. Sometimes I'll push to go get some milk or something without it.

AU: Haven't you been offered spreads in different mags or commercials where you were asked to take it off and refused?

AA: That's just how I am portrayed, with the helmet on. I can't just do a photo without it. It's just not me, and I can't let others control my mind. I am that guy with the helmet. Even though my helmet right now has got zero protection, but technically it's a wakeboarding hard hat. I've been trying to think of new helmet designs, helmets are so fucking... They all look exactly the same, just like T-shirts, you see a million t-shirts, just different colours, different pictures.

AU: What do you think about skateboarding and the Olympics?

AA: It's crazy man, as far as I have heard, they have wanted skateboarding in the Olympics for quite a long time, and skateboarding just hasn't been ready enough. Honestly, with the way that companies are starting to fail, it could be a good boost for

skateboarding. It will help give kids a reason to start, but then again, that's the one thing that's awesome about skateboarding, you don't need a reason to start or to do it. There's no real "corporate reason." You might play ball with hopes to be in the MBL, but now kids might start skating with hopes of being in the Olympics, being world famous and getting laid.

AU: Style vs tech?

AA: I'd rather watch tech. When you work on your style, it actually feels better. I like doing a trick so it feels good. You can train your trick to look good or to feel good. Those are just two aspects of style. It's like, would you rather grind concrete or metal? It looks the same, but feels completely different. A lot of my influences are tech, but I am stoked on doing things properly.

AU: What can you say about your hometown of White Rock?

AA: White Rock has so many guys that came out of it that have influenced skating... Brad Sheppard, Alien, Swell and all those guys. White Rock has birthed a lot of skaters. How? I don't really know. They were the only ones that made it downtown, I guess. When I was a kid, there was a huge gap with my generation of kids not skating. Now there is a whole new crew of 15-year-old skaters. That wasn't the case when I was 15. The next generation up from me were 27 and up.

AU: Who should Shred Session interview next?

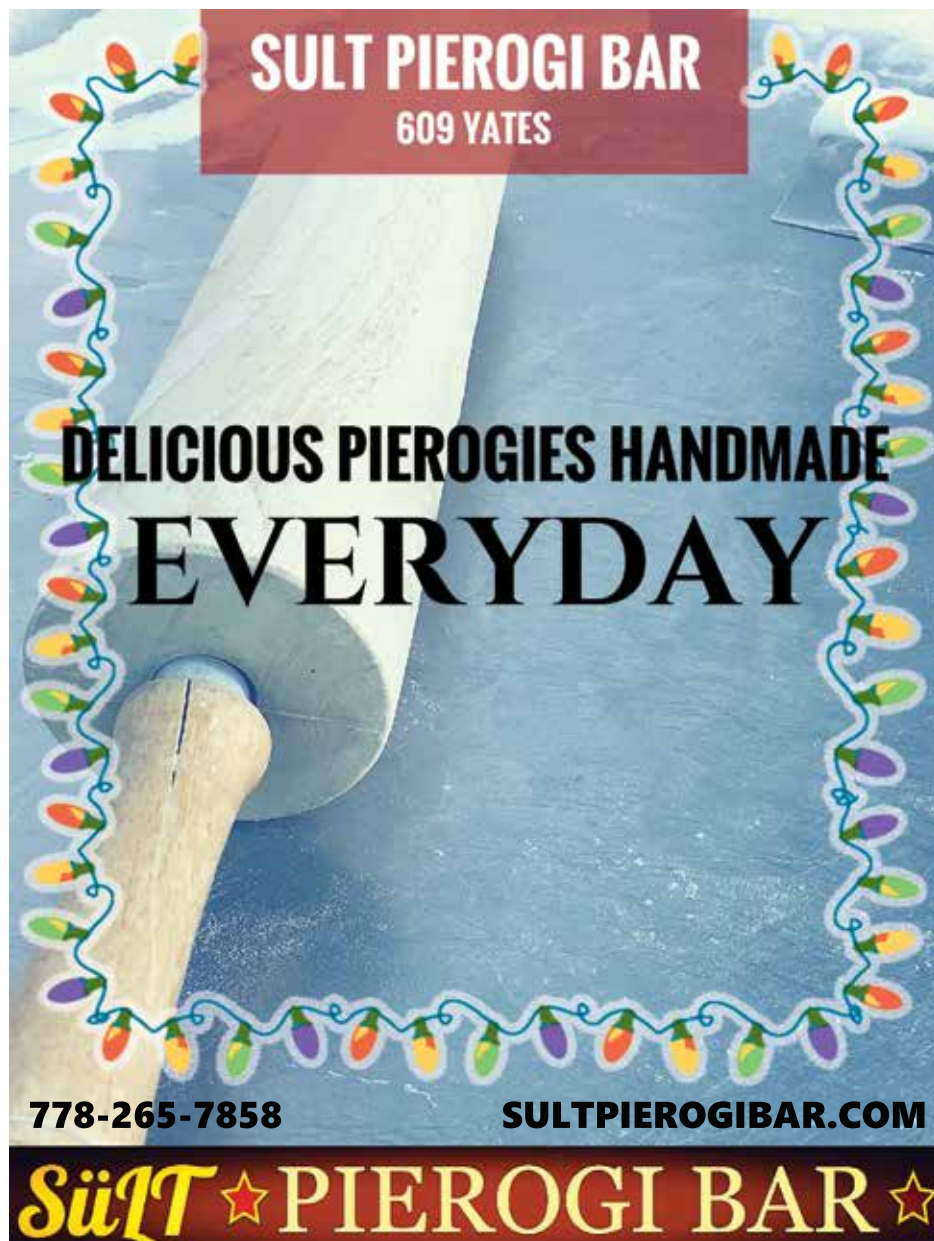
AA: I was thinking about that the whole ride here, and couldn't think of anyone other than Joe Buffalo.

AU: Joe would be good. I've been seeing and talking to Sam Devlin, who said he would be down, too, so stay tuned... we'll see who we get!

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PHOTO CREDIT: Jiles Barrett



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The Damned: Don't You Wish That We Were Dead

A Legacy Is Defined

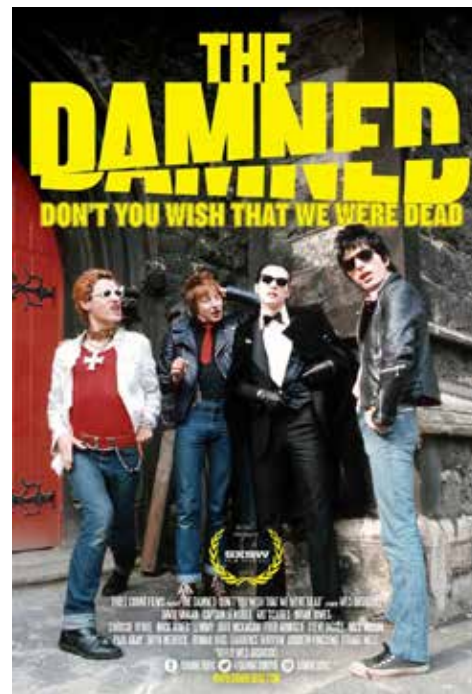
By Ed Sum

The Damned: Don't You Wish That We Were Dead is a fascinating documentary that looks at the rise, decline and resurrection of the United Kingdom's seminary lords of the music landscape. The Damned helped give rise to London's punk rock scene the mid-to-late 70s, and the people they influenced included Chrissie Hynde of The Pretenders, who played with The Damned, albeit briefly, before finding her own road to success.

Although I would have liked to hear more from her brief stint, many other well-known names talk about this band in the documentary. Appearances from Billy Idol, Mick Jones of The Clash, Lemmy, Nick Mason of Pink Floyd, Don Letts of Dead Kennedys and Clem Burke of Blondie are just some of the musicians who lend their insights to what this group represented. Although The Damned never attained the larger success of bands like the Sex Pistols, that may be in part to the image they wanted to project. They were rather schizophrenic early in their inception. Through old and new interviews, stock footage and archival material, this product nicely covers a lot of ground. The drama is tough to find, but the retrospective in showing how The Damned evolved with the times is the highlight. The latter half is the more fascinating, but that depends on when the viewer became interested in this group's music. This band's style changed throughout the decades; from punk to goth, where they can achieved their mainstream success is just one layer of this movie-length discourse.

From their years of being active in the scene to being inactive and changes in their roster, this documentary covers a lot of ground. The drama between the two heavyweights, bassist/guitarist Captain Sensible and drummer Rat Scabies is at the core of this product, some of which has been widely publicized. Parts of this video look at their disagreement over unpaid royalties. Whether this dispute is ancient history or not, that's tough to say. Interestingly, there was also a difference of opinion in what punk rock represents, since these were the years the movement really got noticed.

In a product that took three years to make, finding the focus requires paying attention to the two-hour discussion, picking and choosing which parts of the film are interesting over others. It is nicely divided into chapters; I enjoyed the refresher course in what these folks consider as punk. They were writing music and singing about



the working class. These were the days of vinyl — and as one part of this film revealed, an entire side of the record album would be dedicated to explaining their side of the world, if not life.

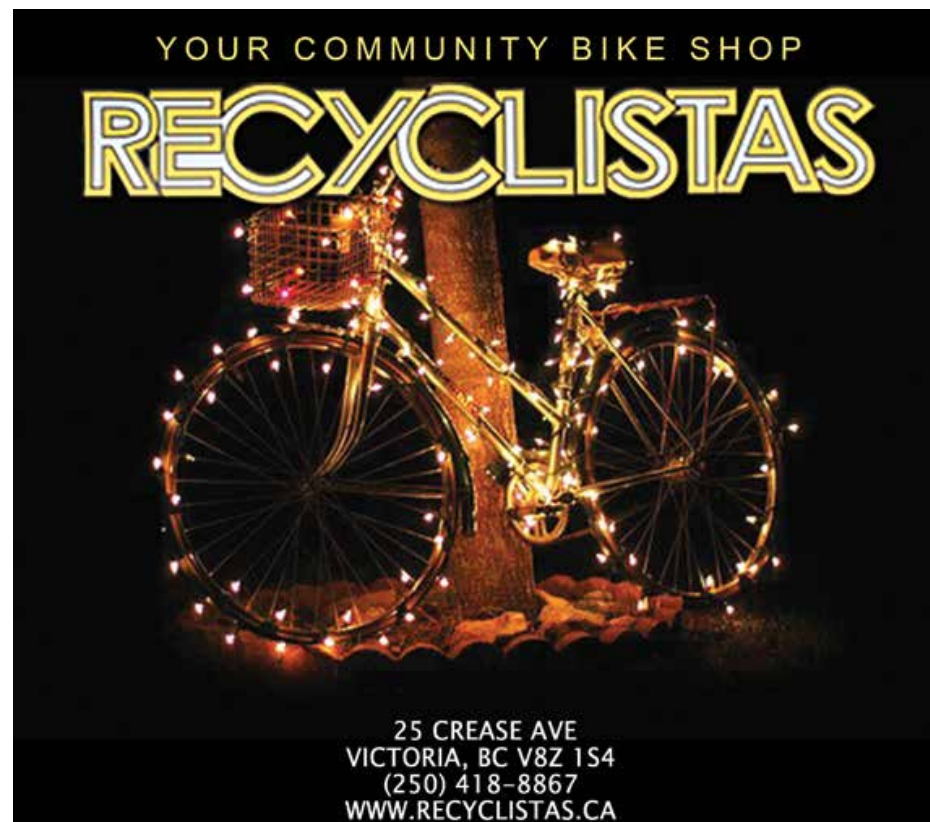
What this documentary does nicely is to provide more than a retrospective for a group who is still going strong. They are performing, giving interviews and letting fans know they are not dead. Although former bassist Bryn Merrick (Phantasmagoria) passed after the release of this product, the rest of the mates are still at it, proving their contribution to the world of rock is here to stay.

A list of theatrical screenings can be found on <http://damneddoc.com/screenings> and for those who wish to own the video release, this documentary is now available for purchase on Amazon.

The video release contains a bevvvy of extras, including the following:

- Captain Sensible's tour of Croydon.
- A featurette on the 1976 Anarchy Tour (in which the real story behind the Damned's ousting from that tour is told for the first time).
- A featurette on The Doomed era of the band, featuring former bassist Henry Badowski.
- Audio track by the Captain at a "Doomed" rehearsal at Rat's parents' home.
- A clip with the Captain and comedian/actor/musician Fred Armisen busking in L.A.

damneddoc.com/





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Medical cannabis patients have driven the movement for access to cannabis. Legislated change is coming. THHC is part of the conversation to develop intelligent, workable policy and regulation for cannabis that considers patients first. For more information visit www.thhc.ca or facebook.com/theherbalhealthcentre.



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